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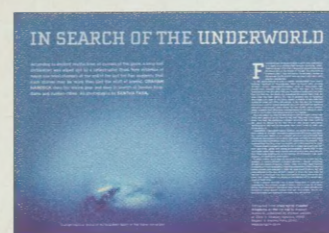
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EDITORIAL

SUNKEN LANDS, STUFFED SHIRTS



OFFENDING THE ORTHODOXY

Charles Fort wrote that he didn't know how to find out anything new without some of his questions being certain to offend someone, usually a scientist. Today, orthodox scientists are still a close-ranked lot. You only have to think of the 'official' reaction, in 1973, to Professor Eric Laithwaite's demonstration before the venerable Royal Institution of a gyroscopic device that actually 'lost weight'.

When Laithwaite, the pragmatic and respected electrical engineer who invented the linear induction motor, introduced the 'reactionless drive' to this august assemblage, it was met with an awkward silence. Laithwaite's experiment called into question what we deduce from Newton's third law of motion (every action has an equal and opposite reaction) by seeming to create a force without a reaction. The mood turned to outrage and, as Richard Milton writes (www.alternativescience.com/eric-laithwaite.htm) "in an unprecedented act of academic Stalinism" Laithwaite was refused Fellowship of the Royal Society, his professorship at Imperial College came to a hasty end and, for the first time in 200 years, the Royal Institution refused to publish an account of an invitation lecture in their Proceedings. (See FT8:18-20.)

While perhaps not in the same league as Laithwaite, Graham Hancock is proving to be as tenacious, as adventurous and as much a thorn in the side of a different, but equally stuffy, orthodoxy. Hancock has succeeded in galvanising public and media interest in the idea that ancient cities - indeed, the remains of unknown civilisations - may lie undiscovered on coastal land that was lost when the seas rose at the end of the last great Ice Age - see FT157:6. Garrett Fagan, professor of classics and history at Penn State University, is one of many archaeologists who are furious at what they see as Hancock's

hijacking of their field discoveries to justify his theories about ancient civilisations. Get a taste of what's winding them up on page 34.

Part of their hostility may be due to the fact that professionals, toiling for years on excavations with very tight budgets, seethe with envy when they see Hancock 'making a fortune' from best-sellers of wild, unsupported speculation and swanning around the world with TV crews at vast expense. However, anyone who has done anything for the media will know that these 'fortunes' are usually mythical and the entire venture is usually one long nightmare of torment, hard work and stress... as Hancock chronicles in his latest book *Underworld*.

Hancock deserves some respect for admitting, in his recent Channel 4 series, that several of his earlier theories have suffered from an excess of enthusiasm. At least he is asking reasonable (and very fortean) questions of an orthodoxy that does not like to be challenged, especially by an outsider.

To another brand of stuffed shirt - the so-called 'scientific ufologist' - one of the most irritating aspects of the UFO phenomenon is the number of bizarre flying saucer cults. They wince at any mention of their eccentric leaders, batty beliefs and credulous followers. Yet these cults were the first significant social reactions to the UFO sightings of the late 1940s and the tales of alien contact in the 1950s and it is significant that most of their members were also interested in occultism, spiritualism and the Theosophical brand of alternative science and history. Remember, George Adamski, classic contactee, also ran an occult group called the Royal Order of Tibet; and Edgar Rice Burroughs' interplanetary adventurer, John Carter, travelled to Mars not by spaceship but by Astral Projection.

The rationalist may sneer at the naïveté of groups like Unarius, but to the believer, the UFO phenomenon is not a scientific mystery; it is a divine revelation and its gods and spacemen are only interested in our salvation. On page 28, Dean Bertram takes an affectionate look at Unarius and how it has survived the deaths of its founders and the successive failures of predicted dates at which the flying saucers were to land in California.

ERRATA

FT157:30 - The picture credit for the portrait of Paracelsus should have read 'Mary Evans Picture Library' rather than 'Fortean Picture Library'.

FT157:52 - The caption for the cartoon was omitted: "Abductio ad absurdum".

BOB RICKARD
PAUL SIEVEKING

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort.

Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum

Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of continuity in which



CHARLES HOY FORT
(1874-1932)



The power and the gory.



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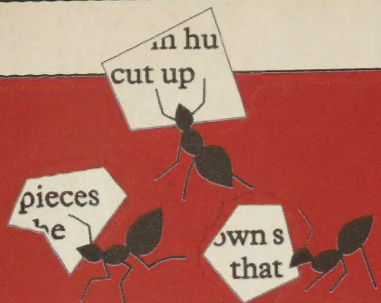
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strangedays

A DIGEST OF THE WORLDWIDE WEIRD



PAST LIVES
I flew with
the Luftwaffe
page 12



HOPPING MAD
Chile's glow-in-
the-dark entity
page 16



FELINE TREKS
The cat
came back
page 22

NECROPOLIS NOW!

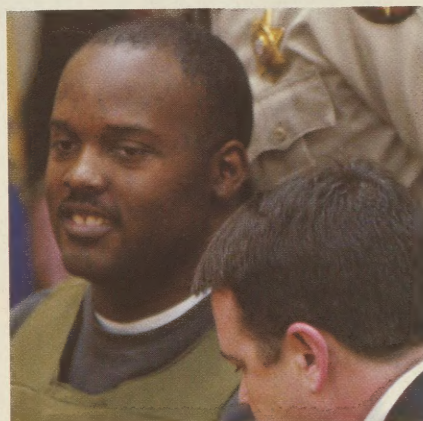
A chance discovery in the Georgia woods leads police to a grisly cache of corpses

On 15 February, a woman walking her dog came upon a human skull in woods near the Tri-State Crematory in Noble, a small town in northwest Georgia, about 20 miles (32km) south of Chattanooga. An investigation of the 16-acre property led to the discovery (at the last count) of 339 corpses in sheds and strewn amid tangled undergrowth – of which only about 15 per cent had been identified. The investigation, which will last up to eight months, is expected to find many more bodies, possibly as many as 1,000. Some were buried, up to 40 at a time, in 10ft (3m) deep pits dug in the overgrown grounds; others were thrown into a three-acre lake, which is now being drained.

The crematorium served between 25 and 30 undertakers in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, and most of the bereaved families will not have been aware that this was where their relatives were sent. Some of the bodies had been there for more than 20 years and were nearly skeletal, while others, fresh from undertakers, were still in their funeral clothes and bore toe tags. An infant's body was found in a box in the back of a rusting hearse. There was said to be no smell from the grounds, possibly because most of the crematorium's business came from the two neighbouring states and bodies transported across state lines have to be embalmed first.

There were nearly two dozen coffins that had once been buried, and in some cases their embalmed contents had been dragged out and left exposed to the elements for years. "At one time they apparently were buried in the ground in some other cemetery and were dug up and taken to the crematory," said John Bankhead, spokesman for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. "We don't know why that is."

In the absence of any state laws barring inappropriate treatment of corpses, the crematorium manager, Ray Brent Marsh, 28, was charged with theft by deception for taking payment for cremations he didn't perform. In many cases, families who thought their relatives had been cremated received urns containing powdered concrete or "wood



PHOTOGRAPHS OF DECOMPOSED BODIES WERE FOUND ON HIS COMPUTER

chips mixed with dirt and other material." Brent Marsh's parents, Ray and Clara Marsh, who own the business, were not charged. Brent had taken over the running of the crematorium from his ailing father in 1996. He claimed that the crematorium incinerator, bought in 1982, had broken down several years ago and shortage of funds had prevented its repair, but authorities revealed on 4 March that the machine's manufacturer had tested it and found it was working properly. In a further ghoulish twist, investigators discovered photographs of decomposed bodies on Brent's office computer.

The first body to be identified was that of Luther Mason, whose daughter-in-law, Neva Mason, said: "I've known the Marshes all my life. My brother graduated college with

DEADLY HARVEST: Ray Brent Marsh (left); his property has so far yielded 339 corpses (right).

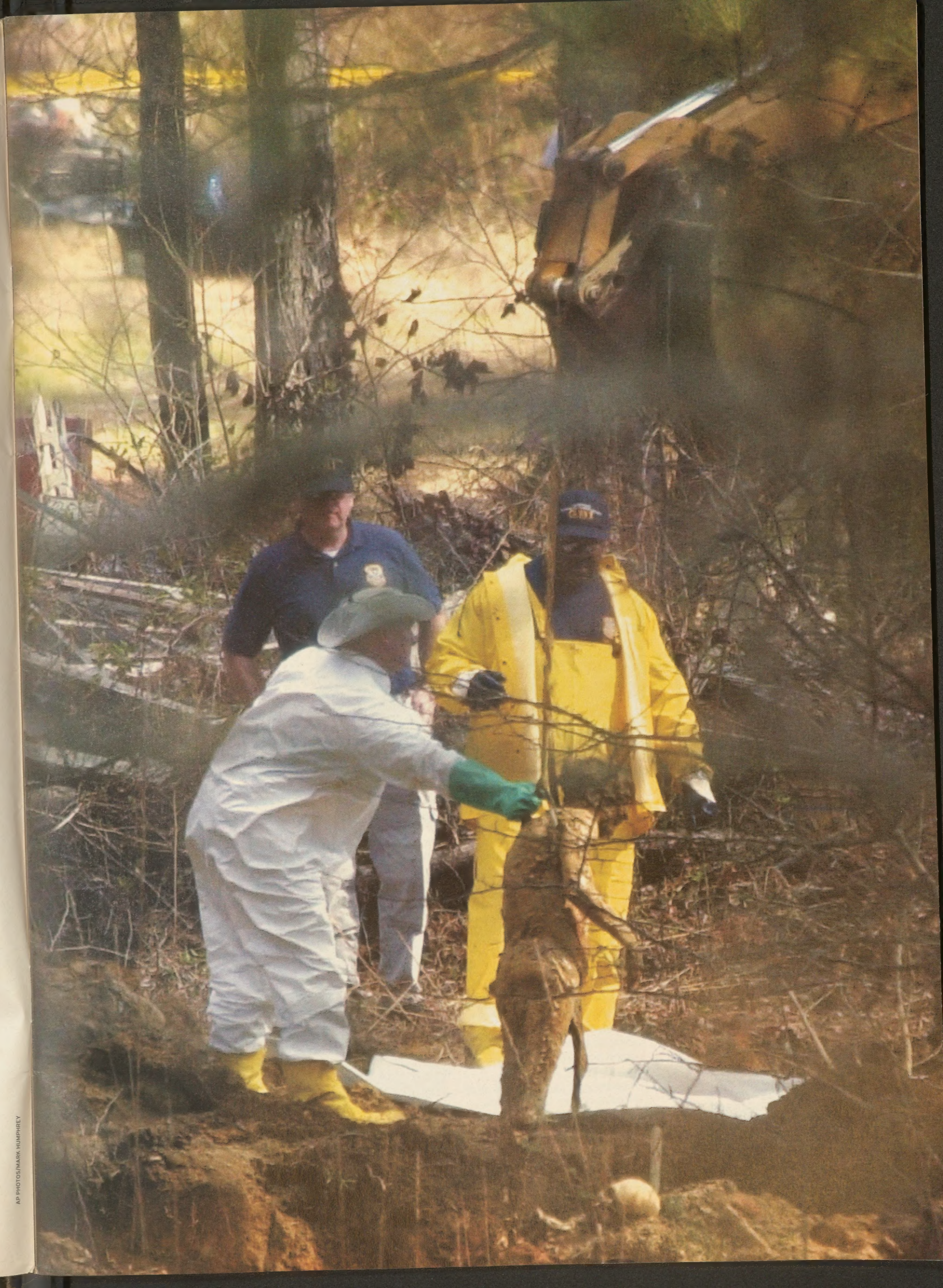
Brent. They're wonderful people. Mrs Marsh helped hundreds of kids in this area." Clara Marsh, 70, a former English teacher, was president of the Walker County Association of Educators and chairwoman of the local Democratic Committee; she was once Walker County Citizen of the Year. Brent Marsh was described as an "upstanding citizen" and a "faithful member" of the local Baptist church, where he acted as treasurer. He also sat on the county board of family and children services. No-one in Noble can recall ever receiving an invitation to the Marsh home and those who called were not asked inside.

Tri-State was the only crematorium in the county when the Marshes founded it 30 years ago. In 1992, only two per cent of people who died in Noble were cremated; now it's approaching 25 per cent. A burial costs about £5,000 while cremation normally costs between £500 and £1,000 – although the Marshes undercut their rivals by charging only £300. They were investigated by the local police in 1995 when there was a report that body parts had been seen on their property – but, amazingly, no search was made. Their false claim that they did not deal with the public direct but only with undertakers meant that they were not subject to regulation or inspection under Georgia law.

The scandal comes only two months after a class action against Service Corp International of Houston, the world's largest cemetery company. One of its establishments, Menorah Gardens & Funeral Chapels in West Palm Beach, Florida, is accused of recycling graves and dumping human remains in its wooded grounds.

[AP] 21 Dec 2001; NY Times, 17 Feb; Guardian, D.M., 18 Feb; D. Telegraph, 18+19 Feb; [AP] 21 Feb; Sunday Telegraph, 24 Feb; Ananova, 5 Mar 2002.

**SEE PAGE 17 FOR MORE
CADAVER-KEEPERS...**



MONKEY PUZZLE: Researchers plan to investigate why the De Brazza monkeys, found only in Kakamega forest in north-west Kenya, keep the number of their troupe at exactly 35. This will be difficult, because the monkeys are alert and hide from humans. "You can find young ones born, but the number remains at 35," Senior Wildlife Service official Muteru W Njauini told the *East African Standard*. *Ananova*, 14 Feb 2002.

NAKED AGGRESSION: Naked robbers have been terrorising the villagers of Nafitkhali Baattoli in southern Bangladesh, who run away, leaving their homes to be ransacked. "We considered overpowering them," said a villager, "but the chances of catching them were slim because they had applied oil to their bodies." A police spokesman said: "Nude terrorism will be dealt with using a firm hand." *Sunday Times*, 30 Dec 2001.

CHILLING OUT: In defiance of global warming, surface air temperature in the Antarctic desert area known as the Dry Valleys, near McMurdo Sound, has dropped by an average of 0.7°C over each of the past two decades, a phenomenon repeated elsewhere on the continent. The data was published in *Nature* magazine online. *The Week*, 19 Jan 2002.

LATE DEPARTURE: Jeremy Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism, has been removed from University College London for the first time since his death in 1832. "We discovered an infestation of conservator egg larvae in the stuffing around his body, so he's been sent off to Winchester to be de-loused," said UCL's head beadle, Mike Brady. "There were also a few woolly bear eggs... but none of those had hatched." *Guardian*, 27 Nov; *D.Telegraph*, 21 Dec 2001.

VERY PROGRESSIVE: From *The Rossett PTA News* last November: "New Parent Evening. This was an excellent night, with over 70 parents attending and from the feedback we hope to shortly organise a sex-and-drugs evening."

WELSH METEORITE

Cause of the trench gouged into Welsh hillside remains mysterious



LIVERPOOL DAILY POST AND ECHO

IN JANUARY, FELL RUNNER MIKE Blake discovered a 60ft (18m) trench, about 3ft (90cm) deep, at 2,500ft (760m) above Llanberis in North Wales, between Moel Eilio and Snowdon. It had appeared since he took part in a race which passed the spot in October. "It appears that a rocky outcrop was hit and shattered, as there are fragments over a wide area," said Mr Blake. Rocks had been

SNOWDONIAN SCAR: Mike Blake at the location of the possible meteorite impact.

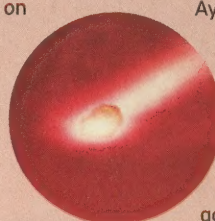
flung 300ft (90m) by the force of impact. A fellow runner had reported the trench in December, but at that time the area was under snow. "A cosmic impact is a possibility at the moment," said Professor Mike Bailey of Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland. One puzzling feature, he said, was the long trench which indicated an object hitting the ground at a shallow angle, while a meteorite would be expected to approach the Earth much more directly. The only way to show that it was a meteorite would be to excavate the alien rock, which would lie well below the surface in a tunnel beyond the trench.

Any meteorite which could have caused such damage would have appeared as a fireball thousands of times brighter than a shooting star, as well as causing a loud sonic boom. "There's a possibility that it could be an iron meteorite," said Jay Tate, director of the Spaceguard Centre in Knighton, Powys. "Shooting stars are between the size of a grain of rice and a grain of sand. We're talking of something significantly larger." A less likely possibility is that the trench was caused by a lightning strike.

Following the initial press coverage, Graham Ford-Keyte from Dinorwig said he was driving home from Liverpool at about 10.30pm on 12 December when he saw what he took to be a shooting star immediately above Moel Eilio. "It was a very clear night and a bright flash, which lasted about a second," he said. *Western Mail*, *Ynys Môn Chronicle*, 24 Jan; *Daily Post*, 24+25 Jan 2002.

SONIC BOOMS

A meteoric explosion at 8.30pm on 27 October, followed by a light trail lasting half an hour, caused hundreds of people to call emergency services across south and east England. It was thought to be an Orionid, meteoric debris from the trail of Halley's comet, through which Earth passes twice a year. The light was so bright it could be seen in Holland. The following day, an earthquake measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale struck the east Midlands, with an epicentre near Melton Mowbray,



Leicestershire, causing damage to buildings.

On 13 November, Eyemouth and nearby Ayton in the Scottish Borders experienced a massive sonic boom. "We have reports of a number of unusual effects felt in the Berwickshire area," said a spokesman for the British Geological Survey. "People reported windows rattling, houses shaking and car alarms going off. This was not an earthquake, though, and is consistent with a sonic event, either from an aircraft going supersonic or a meteor entering the Earth's atmosphere." *D.Mail*, *D.Telegraph*, *Guardian*, 29 Oct; *Edinburgh News*, 14 Nov; *Metro*, 15 Nov 2001.

DELUGE OF COMPLAINTS

Jim and Margaret (right) McGregor, from Cardonald in Glasgow, have not had much luck with holidays. In 1997, they visited Clearwater in Florida. To reach their apartment they had to cross a three mile (5km) causeway with water on either side. Halfway across, there was a torrential downpour. The road flooded and, with a gale battering the car, they were sure they'd be swept into the water. Jim could only see a few feet and thought they were bound to have a head-on crash - but eventually they managed to reach solid ground. They returned to Florida in 1998, just as Hurricane George headed their way. They joined the mass evacuation, but the only hotel room they could find was 100 miles (160km) away. In 1999, they went to Tenerife, where they were greeted by freak summer thunderstorms. One night at 10pm, they were sitting in their apartment when the weight of rain made the roof fall in on them and all the lights went out. They felt their way out of the building and found another apartment for rent.



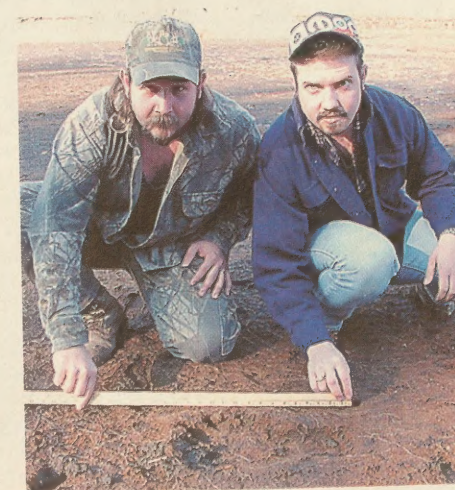
In 2000, gales and storms blighted their trip to Santa Ponsa, Majorca. Their daughter's wedding in the Bahamas in June 2001, which they attended, had to be indoors when the inevitable raging storm only let up for one day in two weeks. They are thinking carefully about where to visit this year. *Sunday Post*, 9 Dec 2001.

RESERVOIR HOMINIDS

Track shoe logo hints that prints not made by an ape, experts conclude

ON 14 FEBRUARY, STEVE GATES, OF Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and his brother Dennis (below) visited the Waynesboro Reservoir to see the reported 13ft (4m) drop in the water level caused by drought. They found hundreds of

an unforeseen outcome of the design of the prankster or pranksters. Various internal diagnostic features demonstrate the basis of the prints are from the tracks of a pair of human-made shoes with structures added.



THE RECORD HERALD, WAYNESBORO, PA.

apparent hominid tracks in the mud flats at the upper end of the reservoir. "They were very distinct. You could see toe marks, the heel, even the arch," said Steve Gates, 28. The prints, which were 12.5in (32cm) long and 3in (8cm) across the arch and heel, extended about 350 yards (320m) in the mud before disappearing back into the woods. Loren Coleman and Mark Hall, cryptozoologists and FT correspondents, examined photographs of the prints and concluded they were a hoax. "We can't definitely identify the brand of sneaker, but the logo is there," they wrote. "You're getting a repeated human-made imprint in the middle of the arch. The tracks appear to reveal a type of glove or fixture made rigid and placed on the front of worn footwear. Thus, the 'toes' have left 'claw marks' and an 'ape configuration' merely as

Loren said the prints might also have been made by the footwear of something like a Hallowe'en monster costume. The initial reports piqued his interest because of what appeared to be a big toe extending away from the foot, much as it would in the prehensile foot of an ape. During his 40 years of investigation, he has been particularly interested in reports of "Napes," North American apes. Such creatures, if they exist, would be more

like a chimpanzee than the huge Bigfoot or Sasquatch of popular legend. *Waynesboro (PA) Record Herald*, 18+21 Feb; *Frederick (MD) News-Post*, 20 Feb 2002. www.lorencoleman.com www.anomalist.com/books/bf.html <http://home.att.net/~mhall.bigfoot/> <http://home.att.net/~mark.hall.wonders/>

DIPPING WICKS: Meteorologist Penehuo Lefale, addressing an international conference in Samoa, said that ancient seafarers dragged their testicles in the sea to test the temperature and ascertain how far away they were from land. They apparently judged this by checking how much their scrotums (?scrota) tightened. *Ananova*, 11 Dec 2001.

NO-SHOW JESUS: Kaziah Hancock gave 67 acres of her farm in Utah to the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days. In return, the church founder, Jim Harmston, said she would meet Jesus in the flesh. When the Messiah failed to show up, she sued for breach of contract and emotional distress and won \$270,000 in damages. *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, 31 Jan; *Guardian* Editor, 9 Feb 2002.

TROMPE L'OEIL: A newly-wed couple from Plymouth returned home from their honeymoon to discover their front door bricked up and a new door painted on the bricks. *Plymouth Eve. Herald*, 18 Oct 2001.

SENIORS PASS ON: The world's oldest documented male koala died in San Francisco in February aged 19. A few days later, Ginkichi ("Lucky Penguin"), claimed to be the oldest penguin in captivity, died in Japan aged about 42. Wild penguins usually live up to 20 years. *Sunday Telegraph*, 10 Feb; *D.Telegraph*, 13 Feb 2002.

RECKLESS DOWN UNDER: According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 31 Australians have died since 1996 after watering their Christmas trees while the fairy lights were plugged in; and 18 had serious burns in 1998 trying on new jumpers with lit cigarettes in their mouths. Three Australians die each year from testing if a nine-volt battery works by placing the connections on their tongue. *Gold Coast (Queensland) Bulletin*, 26 Nov 2001.

DOGGONE: The most popular car sticker in South Korea in December was said to be: "A dog is not just for Christmas, but with a good freezer there may be some left over for the World Cup". Can this be true? *Irish Times*, 24 Dec 2001.

WELL HUNG: A sign to be seen on the road outside Bewl Water, a noted trout fishery, reads: "European Open Fly Championships". *New Scientist*, 5 Jan 2002.

FAULTY TRIBUTE: Reginald Neave finally lost patience with his 1983 Nissan Pulsar car when the brake cylinder ruptured on 24 July. He moved the car to the end of his driveway in Preston, near Melbourne, and "administered the last rites" by repeatedly firing his rifle into the radiator. He continued firing even when surrounded by armed police, and was sentenced to 200 hours' community service. *Melbourne Herald Sun*, 5 Oct 2001.

STUNNING RESISTANCE: A Romanian engineer can touch wires charged with 380 volts and feel only a slight itch. Constantin Craiu discovered his gift in 1972 while working on a circuit board. He never switches off the power while fixing anything. [For a Bulgarian with the same gift, see FT43:4]. *Metro*, 22 Jan 2002.

SURREAL DIET: Danny Partner, 26, a cab driver in Los Angeles, eats about 12 iceberg lettuces every day, smothered in chocolate sauce. *Sunday Mail*, 18 Nov 2001.

WHAT A BEAST! Humberside chef Stephen Hall, 23, picked a bad time to have sex with a she goat at the Paradise allotments near his home. He was arrested after a train stopped at signals and dozens of passengers spotted him mid-coitus and rang 999. Two passers-by wrestled Hall to the ground until police arrived. Detective Crinnion told the court: "I saw the goat the next day. It didn't seem upset, but it is difficult to tell." *Sun*, 31 Jan 2002.

HOLING UP: After crashing his vehicle into a truck in Qingzou city, Shandong province, eastern China, in December 1997, killing one person and injuring another, a Mr Wang dug a four square metre (43 sq ft) hole under his bed, where he hid for the next four years, only emerging at night to buy food. During this time, he married and fathered a child. [AFP] 10 Nov 2001.

LOOSE TRANSLATION?

Pentagon version of Bin Laden's 'confession' was falsified, say Arabists



UBL: (...Inaudible...) we calculated in advance the number of casualties from the enemy, who would be killed based on the position of the tower.

AP PHOTOS/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (US)

ON 20 DECEMBER 2001, THE GERMAN TV channel "Das Erste" broadcast an analysis of the American translation of the Osama Bin Laden video that President Bush called a "confession of guilt". Two independent translators and an expert on Oriental studies found it to be both inaccurate and "manipulative".

"I have carefully examined the Pentagon's translation," said Arabist Dr Abdel El M Hussein. "It is very problematic. At the most important places where it is held to prove the guilt of Bin Laden, it is not identical with the Arabic." Where the White House would have us believe that Bin Laden admits that "we calculated in advance the number of casualties from the enemy", translator Dr Murad Alami found that: "In advance" is not said. The translation is wrong. At least when we look at the original Arabic, and there are no misunderstandings to allow us to read it into the original."

At another point, the Pentagon translation reads: "We had notification since the previous Thursday that the event would take place that day." Alami commented: "Previous" is never said. The subsequent statement that this event would take place on

that day cannot be heard in the original Arabic version."

The Pentagon's version also included the sentence "We asked each of them to go to America", but Alami says the original formulation is in the passive along the lines of "they were required to go". He also says that the subsequent sentence - "They didn't know anything about the operation" - cannot be understood.

Prof Gernot Rotter, professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies at the Asia-Africa Institute at the University of Hamburg, sums it up: "The American translators who listened to the tapes and transcribed them apparently wrote a lot of things in that they wanted to hear but that cannot be heard on the tape no matter how many times you listen to it." Meanwhile, the US press has not picked up on this story at all.

It need hardly be said that FT holds no brief for Bin Laden and his organisation; but the alleged manufacture of evidence is a legitimate subject of study in the context of contemporary legend. http://dc.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=16389&group=webcast 31 Jan 2002

BLIP ON THE SCREEN

On 11 September, something odd happened in the data being gathered by the Global Consciousness Project (GCP) which is, according to their website (<http://noosphere.princeton.edu/>), "looking for evidence of a developing global consciousness that might react to events with deep meaning."

The GCP's network of 37 REG devices (called "eggs") placed around the world constantly generate random data which are analysed at a dedicated server in Princeton University, New Jersey, to determine whether the normally random values

correlate with global events. The GCP started in 1998, and the computers are spread globally. Random number generators toss virtual coins 200 at a time; the results should be 50:50 for heads and tails. According to Roger Nelson, the GCP director, on 11 September, there was "strong evidence of anomalous structure in what should be random data", which they estimated 35 to one against chance. The GCP researchers are wary of publicity: if, as has been suggested, focusing on random events generators can affect them, a mass audience has the potential to skew the results of the experiment. *USA Today*, 6 Dec 2001; www.noetic.org, <http://noosphere.princeton.edu/>



BIN LANDING

The sculpture of Bin Laden riding an eagle above the WTC at the Klang Kaew temple near Bangkok will, the artist hopes, "inform future generations about history." *AP/Sakchai Lalit*, 8 Feb 2002.

SIDELINES

ISLAND DISCOVERY: A Royal Navy petty officer who discovered an island in the South Atlantic which did not appear on any charts may have the rocky outcrop named after him. Mark Robinson, 28, was serving on *HMS Endurance* when he saw the island, which is just 0.25 sq mile (0.6 sq km) in size with a peak of 18ft (5.4m). He was the first to step ashore when *Endurance* sent a party to investigate. *D.Telegraph*, 25 Jan 2002.

FOOT FETISH: Janitor Richard Cove, 25, of Worthing, Sussex, telephoned thousands of women to ask them about their feet while pretending to be called Michael Foot. He scoured adverts in *Horse and Hounds* looking for women selling horses. He would steer the conversation round to feet, asking what size shoes they wore, if their feet gave them trouble or even if they smelled. He was convicted of causing a public nuisance and given community service. *Scotsman*, Times, 15 Jan 2002.

DINING OUTLAW: Police in the Strausberg area of Germany are hunting a thief who breaks into bungalows where he makes himself dinner, washes up and leaves clean plates and an empty fridge. He may have struck 200 times. *Boston (MA) Metro*, 15 Nov 2001.

QUITE A MOUTHFUL: Villagers in Chomo Ber Kalan, Punjab, are queuing to have urine blessed by 86-year-old Tantrik Baba. He tells his patients to bring along nine pints (5 litres) of their partner's urine which they then drink. The cocktail can get rid of any disease on Earth, he says. One farmer claimed to have been cured of impotence. "It's time someone put a stop to this nonsense," said a local doctor, "or else we will be forced to close shop." *Ananova*, 26 Jan 2002.

SOZZLED ELK: Having eaten fermented apples, a young elk staggered across a main road in Sweden causing snarl-ups on the road between Gothenburg and Hallingsjö, before collapsing into a stream. Police ushered it into a nearby forest where it sobered up. *Ananova*, 8 Sept 2001.

REMEMBERING THE WAR

Was a British rail worker the reincarnation of a German airman?



PARALLEL LIVES: Turret gunner Heinrich Richter (left) and railway worker Carl Edon (right).

SINCE HE WAS THREE YEARS OLD, CARL EDON of Middlesbrough, Cleveland, regaled his sceptical parents with tales of his former life as a German airman killed when his plane was shot down in 1942. He described the village where he lived and bombing missions, and made drawings of plane instrument panels. A photograph recently discovered by local historian Bill Norman shows a remarkable resemblance between Carl and a German airman, Oberfeldwebel Heinrich Richter, buried in a Thornaby cemetery. Richter, 24, a turret gunner, died when his Dornier 217E-4 bomber crashed onto a South Bank railway during a raid on 15 January 1942.

The wreckage of the Dornier, damaged by anti-aircraft fire before hitting a barrage balloon, was discovered by water board workers in 1997 buried off Tilbury Road - only a few hundred yards from where Carl was stabbed to death at the age of 22 in 1995 by Gary Vinter, later jailed for life. "It's got to be him," said Carl's mother Val, when shown a photograph of Richter taken shortly before the crash over Teeside. "The resemblance across the eyes and the nose is uncanny."

During the excavation of the bomber, it was discovered that Richter's leg, still inside a flying boot, had been severed in the wreckage. "Carl used to say he lost his right leg in the crash, and he had a birth mark at the top of that leg," said Val Edon, 60. On the day that Carl, a rail worker, was murdered, he had been to Skinningrove to collect railway carriages. The day the Dornier crashed it had bombed Skinningrove first and flew on to

Middlesbrough, following the railway line. Carl Edon and Heinrich Richter had made the same journey the day they died.

Carl Edon's experiences are the subject of *The Children That Time Forgot* by Peter and Mary Harrison (Berkley Publishing Group, 1991). "It seems to me to be a fascinating case," said David Christie-Murray of the Society for Psychical Research, "and one I'm sure the SPR would be interested in investigating if the family wanted to." *Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette*, 15 Jan; *Mirror*, 16 Jan 2002.

C'EST LA GUERRE...



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AP PHOTOS/ERIC SPIESS

A SPORTING CHANCE

Among the thousands of international delegates expected at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in February were some rather more exotic visitors.

Victoria Liljenquist of Phoenix, Arizona, told reporters that The Brotherhood of Light, a benign league of ET beings who have been contacting her all her life, would make an appearance some time in the afternoon of 21 February. In 1968, the self-professed contactee, therapist and performing artist was given a vision of this year's winter sports fest, complete with classic cigar-shaped spacecraft hovering overhead. "They're benevolent beings," she told anyone who would listen. "They want the world to unite together, it will be a wake up call." But it seems that someone forgot to set their alarm. The Brotherhood failed to appear on the designated day; a fact not as yet commented upon at Liljenquist's web site, www.victoriaslight.com

Meanwhile, German cross-country skier Johann Muehlegg (pictured above), who was disqualified from the Winter Olympics for failing two drugs tests, claims that his actions are guided by alien hands. In 1999, he defected to the Spanish Olympic team on their instruction: "I was contacted and told what to do by people from the other side". *CNN.com 21 Feb; BBC.co.uk, 27 Feb 2002.*

PERU CREATES UFO WATCHDOG

In December 2001, the Peruvian government established an official group to study UFOs and other anomalous phenomena. The Office for the Investigation of Anomalous Activity is headed by Commandante José Luis Chamorro of the Peruvian Air Force. He told a reporter from the *El Comercio* newspaper: "The key matter here is safety; if a non-Peruvian aircraft enters our territory without proper authorisation, it must be either acknowledged or 'intercepted immediately'... whether it is Ecuadorian, Russian... or Martian." Aliens beware: Chamorro also stated that their mission is "to destroy the enemy and to capture its technology." The team also includes an anthropologist and a hypnotist. *UFO Roundup* editor Joe Trainor also noted that on 10 February 2002, President Bush announced that he was to give Peru an extra

\$167 million to fight drugs in South America. Are the cartels using abductees as drug mules? *UFO Roundup, 12 Feb 2002.*

BRAZILIAN ODDITIES

Around 17 February, strange booming noises were heard over Corguinho, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in southwestern Brazil, where a UFO flap had been going on for a fortnight. A day-

light disc was seen over a farm belonging to Bena Bernardino, where insects and plants with an unexplained yellow pigmentation had been collected. In the first two weeks of February, 20 people around Corguinho had five sightings of a human-like creature about 4ft (1.3m) tall, which walked "with a strange fluctuating motion". In Rochedo, six miles (10km) to the south, five Cebu cattle were found dead and exsanguinated with a single incision on the throat. On 5 February, children in Camapua, 60 miles (100km) north of Campo Grande, the state capital, saw a low-flying black helicopter flying west towards the Serra de Maracaju. *O Estadão, 17 Feb; UFO Roundup 7/9, 28 Feb 2002.*

ANGEL HAIR

Between 2pm and 3pm on 11 October 2001, about 10 people in Subbiano, Arezzo, Italy, saw strange whitish filaments falling copiously and continuously from the sky. They were up to 20ft (6m) long, and many became entangled in trees. They were sticky to the touch. A sample was sent to the Regional Agency for the Protection of the Environment. Analysis revealed a varied structure, but mainly polysaccharide and irregular, suggesting it was

natural rather than synthetic.

The following afternoon, at least two witnesses from different areas of Rome (and at different times) observed a whitish, filament-like substance falling in elongated wads of various sizes, while one or more "pinpoints of light" appeared high in the sky. Both witnesses gathered samples and delivered them to the Centro Ufologico Nazionale. Such filaments falling from the sky have long been dubbed "angel hair" and are often associated with UFO phenomena. *www.cimlazio.net, La Nazione (Arezzo edition), 13 Oct; Ufoitalia, 14+15 Oct; La Rete, 15+16+17 Oct; Italian UFO Newsflash from Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici (CISU), 31 Oct 2001.*

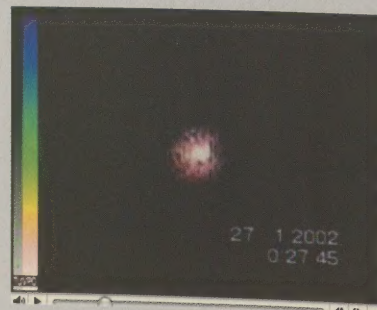
UFO DOWNED IN PERSIAN GULF

According to a recently declassified report on Allied co-operation in the Gulf War, a UFO was shot down in the Persian Gulf on 24 January 1991. It was detected by radar for nearly 30 seconds, flying in an erratic manner, and the order to open fire was given when it buzzed several US warships, including the USS Wisconsin, USS England, USS O'Brien and two British frigates, HM ships *Battleaxe* and *Jupiter*.

The unidentified craft appeared chromium-plated and emitted a high-pitched piercing sound unlike conventional jets. Could it have been a Russian UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle)? It was most likely downed by a missile, although every ship in the US Task Force deployed in the Gulf emptied its conventional armaments to destroy it.

According to the report in *Warship World* (Sept 2001), President Bush has ordered the recovery of the UFO debris, and intelligence analysts were hoping that satellite transmissions would pinpoint its location. *FT* awaits further information with interest.

QUAKE LIGHTS OR ALIEN CRAFT?



On two nights about a week before an earthquake, registering 6 on the Richter scale, killed 45 people in central Turkey, bright lights were seen in the skies above Adiyaman, a city 180 miles (290km) southeast of Ankara. On the second night, five lights, described

as "rotating" and "spreading outward colourful lights", were videotaped for as long as six hours by the Turkish Security Directorate.

Erol Erkmén of the Turkey UFO and Paranormal Events Research Group (TUVPO) pointed out that while some believed the lights to be alien craft, they were hovering over an active fault line, suggesting that they were most likely "earthlights" - ionised energy particles charged by tectonic strain. However, another group, Sirius UFO Space Sciences Research Centre, dismissed the idea, saying that they were visible for too long, and were too far from the quake's epicentre, 400 miles (650km) away in Bolvadin. *UFO Roundup, 19 Feb 2002.*

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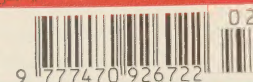
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SEXY PIANO

It is widely believed that the Victorians covered up piano legs in "pantalettes" because they were considered sexually suggestive. The story was first recorded by Captain Frederick Marryat in his *Diary in America*, published in 1839. Marryat is remembered today as the author of *Children of the New Forest*, but he also wrote novels about naval life and edited the *Metropolitan Magazine* in London. His work was very popular and his often unflattering stories about American customs were lapped up by the British public.

Marryat was regarded with some amusement by the smart New York set, including John Van Buren (the President's son). Apparently, Van Buren invented the piano-leg story as a joke and told it to Marryat to see if the Englishman would be gullible enough to publish it - which indeed he was.

Ian Hislop ('First Person', *Sunday Telegraph* magazine, 10 June 2001) sums up the convoluted origin of this Well-Known Fact: "What began as a sophisticated American joke about British perceptions of American prudery became a 'fact' about American prudery, and then a 'fact' about British prudery. I was once told by a teacher that history is often no more than a game of Chinese whispers, and this example certainly seems to confirm his theory."



Piano legs were indeed often covered up, but this was not for modesty but to protect them from cats' claws and children's shoes. Children began piano lessons before their feet could touch the ground and they often swung them at the piano legs. There was a great deal of formal playing of scales and exercises, and bored children tended to kick out in frustration.

THE HOPPING HORROR

Chilean teens were menaced by "telepathic football"



"DON'T STARE, JUST RUN AWAY": Jean F and Nelson C sketch the strange entity.

SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON Saturday, 12 January, Jean F, a young teenager from Villa San Rafael in Calama, Chile, noticed that his pet snake had escaped from its cage. With his friend Nelson C, he went looking for it on nearby waste-ground. The boys recalled that, half an hour earlier, their two dogs had been howling, but it didn't seem important at the time. Suddenly, they saw what appeared to be a stray dog, but started to hop towards them like a rabbit. It stopped and stood up on two legs and the boys felt a kind of electric shock in the stomach. Then it resumed hopping towards them, upright, making a loud dragging noise, and moving only one of its legs. They thought that it might have been hurt by their stone-throwing. It had a weird shape, "like a rugby football with legs" as one of them put it.



Jean retreated, while Nelson felt a strange urge to get closer. At 6ft (2m), the animal appeared to glow in the dark. It had a canine head with a flat nose like a bulldog, large flat round ears, legs like a goat's, and "hands" with three fingers. The feet also had three digits and a membrane like a duck's, but shorter. Its grey hair was like that of a wild pig, and the very thick 2in (5cm) tail was tipped in white. On its curved back, thick hair, "pointing downwards", sprouted in clumps down the spine. Its eyes, slanted and pale red, could only be seen when it turned its head from side to side like a lizard. As he stood there, Nelson heard a voice in his head saying "Don't stare, just run away." He felt

an inexplicable bone-chilling cold and fled in terror. Though the teenagers were interviewed separately, their accounts concurred entirely. *Jaime Ferrer R., Calama UFO Center / Miami UFO Center, 28 Jan 2002.*

BOGOTA'S VAMPIRES

POLICE SAY UP TO 50 GROUPS OF human vampires are operating in the Colombian capital, Bogota. They dress in black and drink brandy mixed with human blood, which they have usually obtained from contacts in transfusion centres, supplemented by animal blood from city abattoirs. Recently, however, they have been stopping pedestrians at

gunpoint, cutting the veins in their necks with razors and drinking their blood. There are few arrests because witnesses are afraid to come forward lest they be thought crazy. Colombia's freedom of religion laws mean the police can't stop and search people just because they are dressed as vampires. Interpol official Juan Prieto told the newspaper *El Espectador* that he was worried vampire numbers were increasing. *Ananova, 17 Feb 2002.*

NORMAN BATES SYNDROME

It's never easy to say goodbye to loved ones - even after death

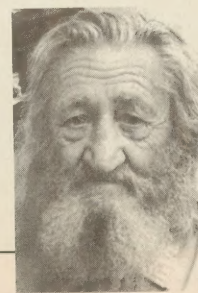
Though the scale of the Georgian unburied bodies scandal is probably without precedent, the retention of kinsfolk after death is sadly all too common. On 12 February, for example, the body of an 84-year-old man was found in a Tokyo apartment a month after his death. His 74-year-old widow, who suffers from dementia, had continued to make him meals, and left bowls of soup in his room. *Mainichi Shimbun (Japan), 14 Feb 2002.*

In December, an inquest was told that Leslie Kemish, 48, lay dead in his bedroom in King's Somborne, Hampshire, for at least four weeks while his mother and brother continued to take him his daily newspaper. A post mortem failed to find the cause of death. "Leslie was in a bit of a mood," said his mother, Jean, 72. "I didn't notice what had happened." *Eve. Standard, 13 Dec; Sun, 14 Dec 2001.*

An unemployed Japanese man in his 50s kept his father's body in a large freezer at home in Yokohama for 13 years, believing his "cells might revive someday". Police found the corpse last July following complaints from neighbours about a bad smell. Because of unpaid bills, the electricity had been cut off some months earlier, causing the body to thaw. *[AFP] Adelaide Advertiser, 18 July 2001.*

Equally optimistic was a Taiwanese man called Chang Chun-lin, who lived with the mummified body of his dead wife for a year. Before she died in December 1998, Wang Hsui-chi, "who used to be a shaman" according to the press report, said she would be resurrected. In April 2000, police raided the couple's flat in the Taipei suburb of Luchou and found the dried body in Chang's bedroom. *Hong Kong Standard, 28 April; [AFP] 2 May 2000.*

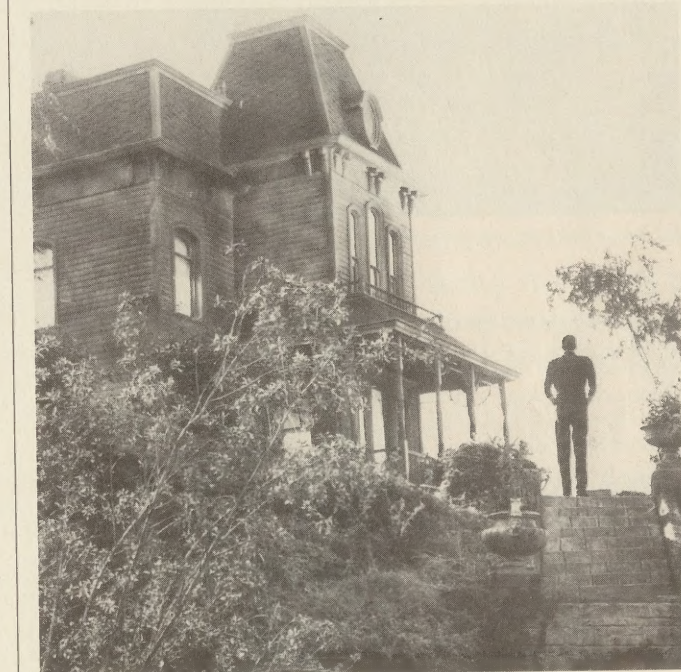
Thirteen years ago, Gesina Pretorius died of a lung infection at the age of 49. Her husband Sarel (pictured right), a



Former accountant Tony Burt, 63, kept

farmer outside Newcastle, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, was heartbroken. "I could not live without her, so I had her embalmed," he said. He dressed her in her favourite nightie and placed a red rose with her in a wooden coffin. Over the next 14 months, he built an air-condi-

tioned crypt below ground, 26ft by 20ft with 3ft-thick walls, and decorated it with her possessions, a Bible, and 11 writing pads containing love letters. Above ground, there is a tombstone. He continues to buy her gifts and play her records. Part of the coffin opens to reveal her face. "I only open it on certain occasions," he told the press in February last year. "Her cheeks have hollowed a little and she's got thinner and darker, but her face is still perfect." *Independent, 19 Feb 2001.*



KOBAL COLLECTION

ered a fortnight later, in December 1998. Steven was last seen for certain in the spring of 1994, when he was 25. Police could find no evidence of foul play. *Guardian, 13 June, 15 July 2000.*

A Moscow woman kept her mother's corpse in their one-room flat for eight years after her death. When her mother died in 1993, Lubov Sozinova, 54, put the body under a mattress. Last April, she told neighbours her strange secret. *[AFP] 27 April 2001.*

Iris Page, 73, slept beside the body of her husband Alfred in Locking, Somerset, for up to three years. The body of the retired aircraft worker was found on St Valentine's Day last year after his widow had a stroke and fell out of bed, and their autistic son Michael, 50, dialled 999. "Don't disturb Dad, he's not feeling very well," he told paramedics. "I didn't call the police to tell them about Dad because Mum is so stubborn," he later explained to detectives. Mrs Page died 12 days later and her son was taken into council care. *Weston & Somerset Mercury, 23 Feb; Bristol Eve. Post, 18+19 May; Western Daily Press, 18 May; Mirror, Sun, 19 May 2001.*

EXTRA EXTRA

HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE WORLD

'LETHAL SLUGS' FIRED AT PUB
Oxford Mail, 20 April 2001.

EXECUTED PRISONER MAINTAINS INNOCENCE
Morning Star, 23 April 2001.

BEAST OF BAKU BEATEN BY UNKNOWN CHESS AMATEUR
Independent, 23 April 2001.

RABBIT LEVELS BUILDING AGAIN
Adelaide Advertiser, 25 April 2001.

ALBANY DIGS A DEEP HOLE FOR GHOULS
New York Daily News, 25 April 2001.

SOOTY ANGERED AT HIS FACE ON CENSUS POSTER
D. Telegraph, 27 April 2001.

LORDS CALL FOR SPEED IN CANNABIS TRIALS
Chemistry in Britain, May 2001.

TITO ENTERS 'NEW UNIVERSE'
Irish Times, 2 May 2001.

BRIGADE AIM TO ALARM THE ELDERLY
Hemel Hempstead Herald Express, 3 May 2001.

HORSE FLOATS FOR DISABLED
Adelaide Advertiser, 3 May 2001.

GIANT LOUSE HEADS UP HEALTH PUSH
Adelaide Sunday Mail, 6 May 2001.

KAZAKHSTAN TACKLES LOCUSTS FROM SPACE
BBC News, 9 May 2001.

HIGH COURT TO RULE ON STRAW DRIVER
Bristol Eve. Post, 10 May 2001.

PIG PROMISES TO CHANGE THE FUTURE
Adelaide Advertiser, 10 May 2001.

GOOSE POOP 'FACT OF LIFE' - JUDGE
North Bay (RI) Nugget, 11 May 2001.

GHOST POLICE CARS HELP CUT PETROL THEFTS
Stoke-on-Trent Sentinel, 11 May 2001.

NEWS OF THE WORLD UNCOVERS SECRET PLAN TO CULL ROYAL FAMILY
News of the World, 13 May 2001.



ARCHAEOLOGY DOG CULTS AND CURSES

NEIL MORTIMER ON ROMAN DOG CULTS, A LOST CORNISH STONE CIRCLE AND CUMBRIA'S MILLENNIUM CURSE



BEAST WITH TWO BACKS: The beautifully carved knife discovered at the Silchester dig.

MAX THE MILLERUS

Archaeologists from Reading University excavating the site of the Roman town of Silchester in Hampshire may have unearthed evidence of a mysterious dog cult. A 2nd-century AD knife made of ivory and intricately carved in the form of two mating dogs was discovered alongside a joint burial of two dogs. The excavations at Silchester have revealed five other canine burials, including one dog buried alongside an infant and another in which the dog had been interred in a standing position, with earth packed around the body to keep it upright in the grave. It is not known whether the dogs had died naturally or if they had been ritually slain. The canine burials span at least two centuries, and are thought to be unique in the Roman world. *Guardian*, 1 Jan 2002.

EWAL CIRCLE

An article in a recent issue of Cornish earth mysteries magazine *Meyn Mamvro* will be of interest to megalithomaniacs. Since antiquarian times there have been suggestions that the stone on the perimeter of the church at St Eval in Cornwall was the sole remaining stone from a lost megalithic circle on which the church had been built. Despite another standing stone being found on the edge of the churchyard in the 1960s, the theory that St Eval's church was built on a stone circle fell out of fashion and was largely forgotten. However, Howard Balmer's article 'St. Eval church and its stone circle' reports that two more standing stones have been located on the conjectured circle's circuit, making the existence of the stone circle a much greater possibility. Additionally, the letters page of *Meyn Mamvro* includes accounts of a high strangeness event at the Merry Maidens stone circle in Cornwall and ghostly voices heard at Scorhill stone circle, Dartmoor. *Meyn Mamvro* 47, Winter/Spring 2002, www.cornwt.demon.co.uk.

REDRUTH REVOLTS

In January, three men, members of the ancient Stannary parliament, were tried in Truro for allegedly committing criminal damage by removing English Heritage information boards at Cornwall's historic sites. Cornish nationalists, or 'Stannators', believe that Cornwall (or Kernow) should be recognised as 'the Celtic indigenous nation

of Britain', and the three were angered that English Heritage would not allow a regional body to administer heritage matters in Cornwall. They began a year-long campaign, codenamed Operation Chough, involving removing English Heritage signs and notice boards from historic sites. In October 2000, the three were arrested after being caught attempting to remove three signs by a security guard at Pendennis Castle. During a police investigation the three men returned the 18 signs that they had taken during Operation Chough and paid English Heritage an additional £4,500 in compensation money. The charge against them of conspiring to commit criminal damage was subsequently dropped, and the 'Chough Three' were bound over to keep the peace for one year. *Guardian*, 19 Jan 2002.

DRUGS IN PRISON SHOCKER

A 'significant quantity' of henbane seeds have been found during the excavation of a 17th-century prison in Stirling, which is being turned into a drama, craft and dance centre. Researchers are supposing that the infamous drug was given to sick prisoners as a cheaper alternative to opium during surgical procedures in the

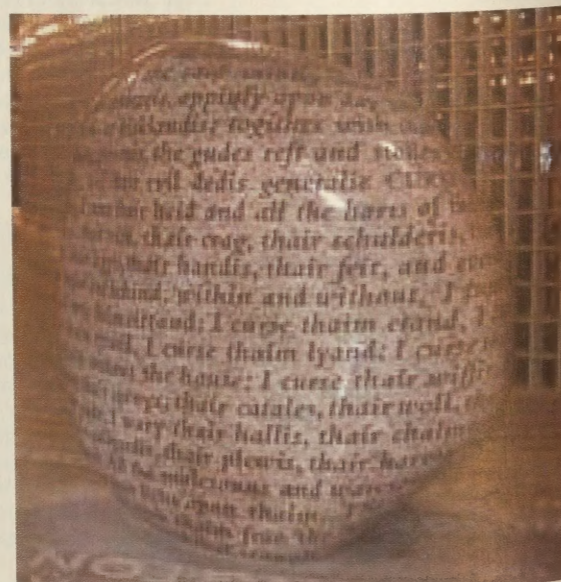
jail. Jennifer Miller, a palaeontologist working on the site, said: "Henbane would knock the patient out for several days, by which time the post-operative shock – which was what usually killed people – had subsided. With henbane, you would either wake up three or four days later without a leg, or not at all". *D. Telegraph*, 21 Jan 2002.

STONE EXORCISM

A museum piece created for an exhibition in Carlisle's Millennium Gallery has got mediaevally-inclined churchmen hot under their dog collars. The offending exhibit is a lump of granite carved with the text of a curse which the Archbishop of Glasgow made in 1520 against the pillaging border raiders who terrorised Cumbria in the 16th century. The current Bishop of Carlisle, the Reverend Graham Dow, wants the next archbishop of Glasgow – who will succeed Cardinal Thomas Winning who died in June – to lift the curse.

A local clergyman, Reverend Kevin Davies, is reported as saying: "This stone, whatever the council's original intent, is a lethal weapon." He had previously blamed the newly-carved rendering of the curse for the spread of foot-and-mouth disease. "Is it a coincidence that the curse was first banded about in 1999-2000 and now, in 2001, we find that North Cumbria is the worst affected region in the entire country?" he wrote in the parish magazine for Scotby and Cotehill with Cumwhinton. "The land retains what is spoken against it and the violence acted upon it."

Carlisle Councillor Judith Pattinson told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme that the engraving was no more than "words very nicely engraved into a huge lump of granite. It is a wonderful thing for visitors to come and have a look at – a fine piece of art". But Reverend Davies disagrees: "As to the future of the stone and the curse it brings, they need to be broken, both literally and spiritually, for all time." *BBC News*, 5 Nov; *Ananova*, 8 Sept 2001.



WRITTEN IN STONE: A "fine piece of art" or a "lethal weapon"?

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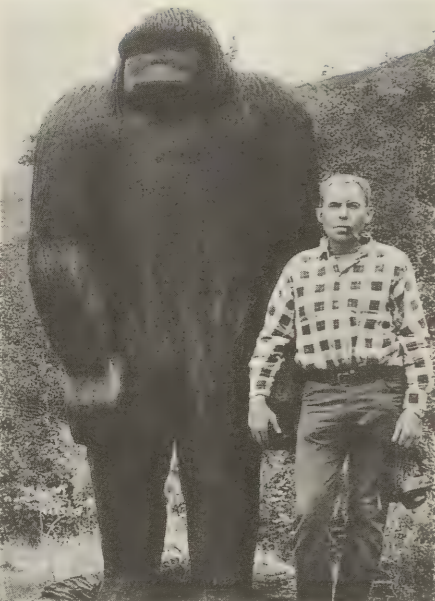
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NECROLOG: CRYPTO-CRYPT

LOREN COLEMAN remembers some cryptozoological greats who have passed away

RENÉ DAHINDEN (1930-2001)
ONE OF THE MOST COLOURFUL BIGFOOT HUNTERS, RENÉ DAHINDEN, 70, DIED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA ON 18 APRIL 2001.



FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY (DAHINDEN IS ON THE RIGHT)

Born in Switzerland, Dahinden moved to Canada in 1953, where he soon heard about the Sasquatch. In 1956, he met researcher John Green, and for years they conducted field investigations together throughout the Pacific Northwest, interviewing many witnesses, and examining physical evidence, sometimes for millionaire Tom Slick. In recent years, with Dahinden's acquiring of the photographic images of the Patterson-Gimlin film, his time was occupied in technical, legal and copyright affairs.

His only book, *Sasquatch* (McClelland & Stewart, 1973; republished as *Sasquatch/Bigfoot*, Firefly, 1993), was written with Don Hunter. The Hollywood Bigfoot family movie comedy *Harry and the Hendersons* (1987) contains a Sasquatch hunter, a character played by David Suchet (famous for his role as Hercule Poirot), loosely modelled on Dahinden. Dahinden appeared, along with John Green, Grover Krantz and Peter Byrne, in the 1999 documentary, *Sasquatch Odyssey*.

JOHN CHAMBERS (1923-2001)
JOHN CHAMBERS, 78, DIED OF DIABETES COMPLICATIONS ON 25 AUGUST 2001, AT THE MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION FUND RETIREMENT HOME IN WOODLAND HILLS.

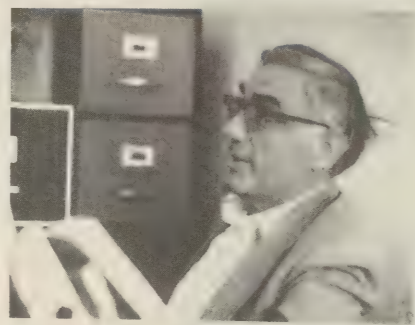
For years a rumour had circulated that Chambers manufactured the suit allegedly worn by the Bigfoot pictured in the famous Patterson-Gimlin film of 1967. On 26 October

1997, American Sasquatch researcher Bobbie Short interviewed Chambers, who denied having anything to do with creating the suit. Chambers told Short he was "good" but he "was not that good" to have fashioned anything nearly so convincing as the Bluff Creek Bigfoot.

During his 30-year career, Chambers worked on several movies and television shows, including TV's *The Outer Limits*. He is best known for designing the anthropoids in the original *Planet of the Apes* (1968) movie, which won him the first special-effects Academy Award.

Chambers' first of only a few acting appearances was in a 1971 movie, *Schlock*, about a California Bigfoot that terrorised co-eds, directed by John Landis (who also played the film's thin Bigfoot). Chambers' student, Rick Baker, who one day would create Harry in *Harry and the Hendersons*, did the makeup and created the Bigfoot in *Schlock*.

GEORGE ALLEN AGOGINO (1921-2000)
GEORGE AGOGINO, 79, ARCHÆOLOGIST, HOMINOLOGIST, CRYPTOZOOLOGIST, DIED FROM CANCER ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2000.



LOREN COLEMAN

He was a friend of Carleton Coon and Ivan T Sanderson, as well as folk singer Pete Seeger with whom he played in 1946. In the 1950s and 1960s, he was a consultant on the Yeti and Bigfoot artefacts of Nepal and the Pacific Northwest gathered by Tom Slick, René Dahinden, and John Green.

An internationally known anthropologist, Agogino came to Portales, New Mexico, in 1963 to lead a summer excavation at the Blackwater Draw archaeological site, and stayed to create the Department of Anthropology at Eastern New Mexico University, which he chaired for 11 years, while also coaching baseball. He retired as Distinguished Research Professor in 1991.

Agogino wrote the foreword for Sanderson's book *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life* (1961). He

and I appeared together in the 1991 NBC-TV's *Unsolved Mysteries* segment on the 'Pangboche Yeti Hand'. During the last day of shooting in

Hollywood, he told me of his and Coon's work for the CIA. He was always full of surprises.

GROVER S KRANTZ (1931-2002)
GROVER KRANTZ, 71, ANTHROPOLOGIST, DIED FROM PANCREATIC CANCER ON 14 FEBRUARY 2002, AT HIS PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON HOME, WITH HIS WOLFHOUNDS AND WIFE DIANE HORTON CLOSE BY.



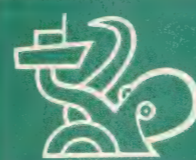
LOREN COLEMAN

He was a professor at Washington State University from 1968 until his retirement in the 1990s and took the unpopular academic position that the primates called Sasquatch actually exist.

The first physical anthropologist actively to involve himself in Bigfoot research, Krantz (PhD 1971, University of Minnesota) wrote or edited several scholarly papers on the Sasquatch (published in *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes*) and four books: *The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch* (University Press of Idaho, 1977, with anthropologist Roderick Sprague); *The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch II* (University Press of Idaho, 1979, with Roderick Sprague); *The Sasquatch and Other Unknown Hominoids* (Western Publishing, 1984, with archaeologist Vladimir Markotic); and *Big Footprints* (Johnson, 1992), revised as *Bigfoot Sasquatch Evidence* (Hancock House, 1999). Krantz was one of the foci of the 1999 documentary *Sasquatch Odyssey*.

Krantz's major non-Sasquatch anthropological works were: *Climatic Races and Descent Groups* (1980); *The Antiquity of Race* (1981, 1994, 1998); *The Process of Human Evolution* (1982, 1995); and *Geographical Development of European Languages* (1988).

According to his wife Diane Horton: "Grover's body will be sent to the 'Body Farm' at the University of Tennessee and then his skeleton will be sent to the Smithsonian Institution along with most of his academic materials. As he helped students in life, his skeleton and materials will be available to serious scholars in death."



KARL SHUKER'S ALIEN ZOO

This month Dr Karl Shuker puts in his bid for a stuffed 'skunk ape' head on e-bay, goes in search of an elusive researcher and his dino-birds and rounds up some albino oddities of the animal kingdom.

IT'S DINO-BIRD... OR IS IT?

In late January 2002, rumours were circulating on the Net to the effect that the palaeontological community was 'abuzz' with news of the discovery of some incredible 'dinosaur-birds' living in seclusion atop a Venezuelan tepui (high isolated plateau) called Aqueputa. According to their alleged discoverer, a Dr José Ramos-Pajaron of Caracas University, who claimed to have observed them with his students, these extraordinary creatures travel in small co-operative family groups, walk upright, stand 6.5ft (2m) tall, are three-toed, and superficially avian, but with a tooth-bearing beak, long stiff bony tail, primitive hair-like feathers, a horny violet crest in the males, long flexible neck, and claw-bearing wings.

However, no such researcher can be traced via Internet searches; and as noted by veteran foratean researcher Scott Corrales, the name 'Pajaron' actually translates as 'big bird'. Corrales feels sure the whole story is a hoax, as does palaeon-

tologist Darren Naish – who points out that the palaeontological community is certainly not 'abuzz' with news of this case, and that the creatures themselves seem to be based directly upon the latest reconstruction proposals for Cretaceous coelurosaur dinosaurs. cz@yahoogroups.com, various postings, 31 Jan 2002.

THE (UN)USUAL SUSPECTS

Two other equally suspect claims have come to my notice recently. One is the briefest of mentions: a colleague in passing stated that during the 1980s a small pterodactyl was reputedly killed and displayed in a store front in

Queensland, Australia, until the decomposing carcass was discarded. No further details are available, but if such a specimen did exist, it may well have been a variation upon the modified 'Jenny Haniver' or composite 'Fijian mermaid' theme of fake fauna. The same surely applies to the supposed stuffed 'skunk ape' head with fearsome tusks (left) that was for sale on e-bay during mid-February 2002. Commenting upon this specimen, American cryptozoologist Chad Arment noted that he had previously seen pictures of a similar taxidermic creation labelled 'Ozark mountain monkey', with the same kind of red



and white hair coloration but without tusks. cz@yahoogroups.com, various postings, 17 Feb 2002.



AP/UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA/JOE RICHARD

WHITE SNAPPER: An albino alligator gets a checkup at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm in Florida.

SOME PALER SHADES OF WHITE

A number of unusually wan-hued wonders of the animal world have hit the headlines lately, including the following selection. Back in August 2001, six male blackbucks *Antelope cervicapra* in Lucknow Zoo, India, mysteriously turned brown (normally the colour of female blackbucks) following the mating season. Even more remarkable, however, was that a further three turned a milky-white. Excessive inbreeding was suggested by officials at the zoo as an explanation. While this is tenable in cases of individual animals born an abnormal colour (white tigers, black panthers, etc), it is less plausible in the case of sudden, abnormal colour changes in adult animals born a normal colour. *Wolverhampton Express and Star*, 23 Aug 2001.

At the end of 2001, 12 rare white American alligators were donated to the Audubon Institute by Burlington Resources Inc. This oil and gas company acquired the alligators in 1997, as part of its \$3.2 billion merger with Louisiana Land & Exploration Co.

Interestingly, these animals are not full albinos, as they have blue rather than pink eyes, and sometimes a patch of normal body coloration too. In newspaper accounts, they were said to be 'leucistic', but this term is more correctly applied to pale 'washed-out'-looking freak specimens rather than predominantly white ones, and is perhaps best known among birds. In contrast, these white alligators compare more closely with the famous Rewa white tigers and Timbavati white lions, which in genetic parlance are

referred to as 'chinchilla albinos'. <http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20020108/us/white-gators-1.html>/ 8 Jan 2002.

Equally notable – and noticeable – is the 6.5ft (2m)-long albino shark spied in waters around the Galapagos Islands during January 2002. It was seen by Juan Carlos Manosalvas, a Galapagos National Park guide, while diving near Darwin Island, and was videotaped for verification. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/justin/nat/newsnat-27jan2002-13.html>/ 27 Jan 2002.

R.I.P. TASEK BERA

In my book *In Search of Prehistoric Survivors* (1995), I recalled the huge 'golden serpents' or *ular tedong* of Tasek Bera – a remote lake in the Malaysian state of Pahang. In 1951, the explorer Stewart Wavell visited the lake in the hope of spying the mystifying 'neodinosaurian' cryptids which, according to the local Semelai people, inhabited its waters. Unfortunately, he failed to do so, though he did hear an extraordinary trumpeting sound said to be the cry of these creatures.

Since then, however, they have been largely forgotten – and now, regrettably, it would seem that any future opportunity to examine the cryptozoological secrets of Tasek Bera has been lost. For in an email on 16 January, correspondent Todd Jurasek informed me that a combination of choking weeds and palm-oil plantations nearby have transformed this once-thriving lake into little more than a cesspool, thus rendering the likelihood of any sizeable cryptids surviving here improbable in the extreme.

FELINE JOURNEYS

More moggies with wanderlust and a good sense of direction



Over the years, *FT* has noted many epic journeys to their old stamping grounds by domestic cats. There was Minosch, who travelled 1,500 miles (2,414km) from Turkey to Germany in 1981; Sam, who made the same distance from Arizona to Wisconsin in 1987-91; and dozens more [*FT*61:46-49].

Particularly puzzling are the examples of cats finding their way to their original owners who in the interim have moved to an address that the cat has never seen. Both Michael W Fox (*Understanding Your Cat* 1974) and Joseph Wylder (*Psychic Pets* 1978) give examples of this, with cats travelling over 1,000 miles (1,600km).

In 1979, Terry and Mary Goulding left Tamworth in Staffordshire to train as publicans at the Roebuck in Pond Street, Hampstead, London, 107 miles (172km) away. They left their seven-year-old cat Micky with Mrs Goulding's sister-in-law. Six weeks later, Micky turned up by their car in Pond Street. "The poor thing was half starved and the claws had fallen out of one of her paws," said Mrs Goulding. *Eve. News, D.M., 17 Aug 1979.*

Further remarkable treks should be entered in the Feline Hall of Fame. Brent Todd and his family moved 850 miles (1,368km) from Farmington, Utah, to Mill Creek, a suburb of Seattle, Washington, in April 1996, taking with them Ninja, their eight-year-old orange tomcat. After a week, Ninja was allowed to explore his new yard, but jumped over the fence and disappeared.

More than a year later, on 25 May 1997, Ninja turned up on the porch of the Todds' former home in Farmington, waiting to be let inside and fed. He was thin and scraggly,

LAPIS TRAVELLED 3,000 MILES FROM COLORADO TO YUKON TERRITORY

but his personality and distinctive caterwaul were recognised by the Todds' erstwhile neighbours, Marilyn and John Parker. Assuming he took a general south-eastern route, Ninja crossed the Columbia and Snake rivers, a few mountain ranges and Oregon's Hood National Forest. Mrs Parker offered to ship him back to the Todds, but they decided to let him stay. [*AP*] 7 June; *Boise (Idaho) Statesman, D.M., 9 June 1997.*

A cat called Ernie turned up at his old home in Victoria, Texas, in September 1994. Chris and Jennifer Trevino had last seen him when he jumped from the family truck at 60mph (96km/h) a week earlier, 600 miles (966km) west of their home. When Mrs Trevino called the cat by name, he came forward and rubbed his face against Mr Trevino's leg. "I saw the marking on his face and I knew it was him," he said. The sores on Ernie's back paws and his worn claws were evidence that he had walked a long way. His front paws were covered with dried blood and dirt. He also had scratches on his back legs. [*AP*] 18 Sept 1994.

Ranulph, an eight-year-old black tomcat named after the explorer Ranulph Fiennes, was given away in 1997 by Gill Bray of Archiestown on Speyside to her friend in Consett, Co. Durham, 300 miles (482km) away, but disappeared soon afterwards. A year and a half later, he reappeared on Mrs Bray's doorstep just as his former owner was leaving to live on the Clyde coast, closer to her work in Glasgow. He had lost about half his weight. *Scotland on Sunday, Sunday Post, 10 Oct 1999.*

When Rev Jennifer and Gordon Mountford-Davies moved the 90 miles (145km) from Swansea to Bath, they took the family's six-year-old black cat Sooty with them, having given her a pill to make her sleep through the journey. Sooty disappeared in September 1996, turning up at the old family home in Swansea seven months later on 14 April 1997, where a neighbour saw her. She was taken in by the Mountford-Davies's children Jonathan, 20, and Claire, 18, who had moved into a top-floor flat nearby. "She had lost a lot of weight and had a few scars and scratches," said Claire. Her journey had either

or through Gloucestershire to avoid the water - an even greater distance. *D.M., D.Mirror, Sun, Bristol Eve. Post, 17 April 1997.*

A cat called Lapis vanished from her home in Boulder, Colorado, on 19 April 2000, the day her brother Hoki was put down because of an incurable kidney ailment. Owner Jennifer Hill posted flyers all over town and placed classified ads offering \$100 reward - without result. Then, in mid-June 2000, she got a call from David Grant in Canada's Yukon Territory, some 3,000 miles (4,828km) away, who said that his niece Susan had spotted a cat running around in Champagne, a tiny mining settlement on the Alaskan Highway near Whitehorse, and found a phone number on her collar. Grant then had Lapis flown back home on 24 June. (*Toronto*) *National Post, 24 June; NY Post, Dallas Morning News, 28 June; Scotsman, 29 June; Lewiston (ME) Sun Journal, 30 June 2000.*

Skittles, a two-year-old tomcat, disappeared on 3 September 2001 from the Wisconsin Dells area of Wisconsin where Charmin Sampson and her son Jason had been living in a trailer and working at a water park over the summer. Twenty weeks later, on 14 January 2002, Skittles turned up at the Sampsons' home in Kelly Lake, Hibbing, Minnesota, 353 miles (568km) away. "I knew it was Skittles," said Jason, 16. "The cat is orange, with white paws and he's got a look to him - a unique look." His paws were calloused and his ribs protruded. *Daily Tribune (Hibbing, Minnesota), 4 Feb 2002.*

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Anna is a 32 year old Medical Secretary from Reading. A slim and attractive non-smoker who enjoys socialising. She likes to listen to classical and operatic music.

Karen, 47, lives in Chichester and likes eating out and spending time with friends. She also enjoys jazz music and the countryside.

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* Names have been changed for reasons of privacy. Membership restricted to ages 18+ only

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Tel No:

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Marital Status:

☐ Single

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

☐ Separated

Age:

Height:

Occupation

Religion:

Build:

Attractiveness:

☐ Slight

☐ V. Attractive

☐ Medium

☐ Attractive

☐ Large

☐ Average

Your Personality

tick which traits closely describe you

☐ Affectionate

☐ Fashionable

☐ Serious

☐ Practical

☐ Considerate

☐ Conventional

☐ Shy

☐ Reliable

☐ Romantic

☐ Adventurous

Your interests

Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.

☐ Wining/Dining

☐ Jazz/Folk music

☐ Pubs

☐ Classical music

☐ Sports/Keep fit

☐ Theatre/Arts

☐ Politics/History

☐ Watching TV

☐ Reading

☐ Smoking

☐ Travelling

☐ Mixing with friends

☐ Science/Tech

☐ Children

☐ Cinema

☐ Homemaking

☐ Pets/Animals

☐ Gardening

☐ Pop music

☐ Countryside

Your Attitudes

tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly

☐ I prefer town life

☐ I involve myself in community activities

☐ I have many friends of my own sex

☐ I am interested in current affairs

☐ I am looking for one special relationship

☐ I like team activities

☐ My work makes it difficult to meet new people

☐ I want to extend my social life as well as finding a special relationship

Your Ideal Partner

Min. age:

Max. age:

Height: min.

max.

☐ Don't mind

Marital Status:

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☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

☐ Separated

☐ Don't mind

Build:

Attractiveness:

☐ Slight

☐ V. Attractive

☐ Medium

☐ Attractive

☐ Large

☐ Average

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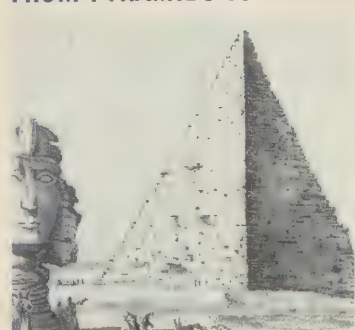
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FORTEANA FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD COMPILED
BY BARRY BALDWIN

FROM PYRAMIDS TO PYRAMIDIOTS



"The notion these pyramid-piling pimps had a civilisation has turned a lot of people on to the wrong track" – Kingsley Amis & Robert Conquest, *The Egyptologists*. FT153:8 reports Farouk El-Baz's notion that pyramid and sphinx shapes were inspired by natural hill formations, an idea resisted by conservative Egyptologists who see the pyramid as symbol of divine ascent, not a Fort topic, unlike King Tut's curse (*Books*, pp678, 701, 884).

Pyramid-builders could have adapted a natural phenomenon: no ancient text explains the choice of pyramid, so speculation is legitimate. El-Baz was variously anticipated, from Herodotus, whose statement that the peasants attributed the Cheops and Chephren pyramids to "the shepherd Philitis" seems a muddled reference to the invading Hyksos/Shepherd Kings c.1700 BC, to John Taylor's *The Great Pyramid: Why Was It Built And Who Built It?* (1859). Mesopotamian ziggurats – remembered in the Tower of Babel – are another outside factor, likewise pyramidal development from rectangular *mastabas* (peasant work benches), while sphingiform rock shapes are not new; cf. Desmond Stewart, *The Pyramids And Sphinx* (Newsweek Books, 1969, pp36, 44, 148 – the last from Harriet Martineau's 1846 travelogue). Those desiring more exotic origins will prefer the fellow mentioned by John Ray (*Times Literary Supplement*, 13 Mar 1998, p13) who "proved" the Sphinx' antiquity because he'd found its prototype on Mars!

Apart from the Ascent symbol, there's also a Descent one, the Sun's rays striking downwards at the angle of the Great Pyramid's Giza slope: JH Breasted, *Development Of Religion And Thought In Ancient Egypt* (Harper, New York, 1959, p72.)

"Pyramid" comes from Greek 'pyramis', which in turn may derive from Egyptian 'per-e-mus' meaning Straight Up From The -Us (=?); the Egyptian for pyramid is 'mer'. 'Pyramis' was also Greek for "wheat cake", prompting Herodotus' modern editor WG Waddell (1939) to suggest a semantic joke. This suits Roman dismissals of the pyramids as futile colossi, e.g. Pliny, *Natural History*, bk36 ch16 para75, and Frontinus, *On Aqueducts*, ch16. Ammianus (*History*, bk22 ch15 paras28-9 – fourth century AD), a Syrian, understood "pyramid" as from Greek 'pur' (fire), after its cone-like narrowing, a now overlooked explanation that may retain Eastern solar notions.

Herodotus (*Histories*, bk2 chs124-36) provides the first outsider's account, basis for the later ones of Diodorus Siculus (*Library*, bk1 chs62-4) and Pliny (bk36 ch16 paras76-82). No FT-like stories, except for Cheops prostituting his daughter, who demanded one stone from each client, with which she built her own 150ft square pyramid. He reports but (unlike Pliny) rejects the yarn that the Third Pyramid of Mycerinus (who inspired Matthew Arnold's 1849 poem of that name) was erected by the courtesan Rhodopis, mistress of Aesop; in Manetho's *History Of Egypt* (ft20 – third century BC) she becomes the fair Nitocris. Such romances, along with Herodotus' giant statues of Mycerinus' naked concubines, doubtless helped to generate the Arab legend of Al Masoudi (10th century) and others that this pyramid was haunted by a lovely naked woman who drives men mad. Sceptically recording Arab pyramidology, Oxford astronomer John Greaves (*Pyramidographia*, 1646) mentions killer snakes placed in each. This perhaps encouraged the Earl of Charlemont's too-often told story of "a large serpent in one of the pyramids of Egypt" – Boswell, *Life Of Johnson*, v3, pp351-2.

Despite Justus Honorius (fifth century AD), who claimed they were Joseph's Granaries, and John Taylor, the father of modern pyramidology was Charles Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal of Scotland, whose *Our Inheritance In The Great Pyramid* (1864) propounds via his invention of the 'pyramid inch' the theory of a divinely-prophetic edifice, his prestige giving (IES Edwards, *The Pyramids Of Egypt*, 1961) "the movement in search of mystery a powerful impetus which shows no sign of reaching exhaustion". Debunking such stuff, Peter Green (*Classical Bearings*, Thames & Hudson, 1989, p281 n20) admits: "Five minutes after I finished this draft, I began shivering violently and retired to bed with 'flu. On recovery, I returned to the piece and promptly developed an inflamed foot. Driving to the clinic, I found myself behind a car with the licence number TUT 777."

"Who can doubt the secret hid/Under Cheops' pyramid/Was that the contractor did/Cheops out of several millions" – Kipling, *Departmental Ditties* (1886).

DOH, A DEER!

Apochryphal reindeer tale was true after all



WE DIVE AT DAWN, DEER: Cdr Sladen, Pollyanna and the Trident.

THE STORY OF THE SUBMARINE REINDEER, WHICH MILITARY historians ignored for decades, turns out to be true. A photo of Cdr Geoffrey Sladen, a former England rugby international and captain of the HMS Trident, petting young Pollyanna was found when his family were clearing out the attic. It is now at the Royal Naval Submarine Museum in Gosport, Hampshire. She was a present from the Pollyarnoe (geddit?) naval base, near Murmansk, where the Trident called for repairs in November 1941. The base commander thought Pollyanna would be perfect for pulling the Sladens' two babies' pram...

The crew of 56 did not want to offend their Russian allies by looking the gift deer in the mouth, and she ended up spending a month on board. She slept in Sladen's cabin, though she wandered all over the sub (the crew later complained about the appalling smell) and lived on evaporated milk and scraps after her moss supply ran out.

When the sub eventually docked, Pollyanna had grown too large to get through the hatch (she had come in that way in a burlap sack), but luckily there was a butcher on board. He trussed her up for her ungainly exit. She was taken to the London Zoo, and died there in 1946, shortly before the submarine went to the breaker's yard.

Writing to the *Daily Telegraph*, Cdr DJL Foster (Rtd) trumped this tale: "HMS Trident's reindeer was not the first one to be imported from Russia by submarine. We took one to Scotland in HMS Tigris a few months earlier than Trident's. I think its name was Minsk." *Times*, 16 Jan; *D. Telegraph*, 16+25 Jan 2002.

BEASTS ARE BITING BACK

Beaver black out, revenge of the ants and other tales of animal subversion and sabotage

Beavers cut power to large areas of North Bay, Ontario, on 23 October 2001 and again on 5 November. On both occasions, utility workers investigating a local swamp found that trees had fallen on the power lines, having been expertly nibbled round the base. *North Bay (Ont) Nugget*, 24 Oct, 6 Nov 2001.

In November, a vulture brought down a light aircraft in Nepal, loaded with emergency food supplies. A few days later, a bee stopped trains for 80 minutes, delaying 1,200 passengers, when it jammed switching points on a circuit board at Kioroshi, west of Tokyo. *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 Nov; *D. Telegraph*, 27 Nov 2001.

Last May, shrimps shut down a South Korean nuclear power plant 120 miles south-east of Seoul when they stormed the cooling water intakes. [AFP] 3 May 2001.

Also in May, a group of ants got their revenge on a gardener in Darmstadt, Germany, when he tried to wipe them out with a home-made flame-thrower. They scurried under a cypress bush containing a lot of natural oil and the bush exploded into a 10ft (3m) wall of flame. The ants escaped while the man suffered serious burns to his arms and legs.



Ananova, 2 May 2001.

Little more than a week later, a steer shot a 35-year-old slaughterhouse worker, an employee at the Better Beef plant in Guelph, Ontario. He was trying to dispatch the animal when it nudged the gun into his stomach as it discharged. The injury was not

considered life-threatening. *National Post (Toronto)*, 11 May 2001.

Ipswich, Queensland, was plunged into darkness for an hour on 8 February 2001 when a flying fox dive-bombed a substation. On 18 March, most of Brisbane,

Queensland, was without power when a frog shorted out a conductor at Rosewood substation. *Queensland Times*, 10 Feb, 20 Mar 2001.

The North Yorkshire village of Thornton Watlass suffered a string of power cuts last year caused by a herd of cows which used an electricity pole in their field as a scratching post. They constantly tripped fuses with their vigorous rubbing. *Sun*, 1 Sept 2001.

The Buck family had to leave their home in Bradford last May after squirrels chewed through electric cabling and council officials declared their house unsafe. They stayed in a hotel while the house was rewired, presumably using an insulation material unappealing to squirrels. *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 May 2001.

Ian White, working as a beater for a shooting party on the Molland estate in North Devon in December, was knocked unconscious by a partridge which struck him in the temple as he sat in the back of a pickup truck. The 1.5lb (680g) bird was flying at about 30mph (48km/h). Mr White was flown to hospital in Exeter, where he regained consciousness an hour later. "If it had been a bigger bird," he observed, "then I probably wouldn't be here today." The kamikaze partridge was killed instantly. *Times*, *D. Mail*, *Sun*, 27 Dec 2001.

WILD ENCOUNTERS

A TIGER WANDERED into a hut in the village of Gosaba in West Bengal where farmer Prasun Kalita was asleep with his wife and three children. In the morning they found it "sleeping like a baby" and tip-toed away. "It's a miracle we didn't end up as dinner for the tiger," said

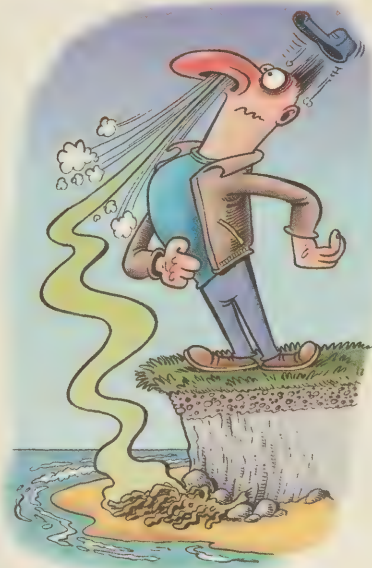
Mr Kalita. "We can only thank Goddess Durga that he slept through the night and did nothing to us." Animal experts tranquilised the big cat and transported it to the jungle. "It was probably too tired to bother about the sleeping people," said a forest department spokesman. *Ananova*, 12 Feb 2002.

A 36-YEAR-OLD Australian camping by the North Kennedy River in far north Queensland awoke to discover a large crocodile lying across his chest. It tried to drag him into the water, but he escaped with the help of a friend. He was taken to Cairns Base Hospital where he was treated for nothing more than bites to his right wrist. [AFP] 24 July 2001.

MYTHCONCEPTIONS 46

BY MAT COWARD

OZONE-BY-THE-SEA



THE MYTH

Seaside air is good for you because it is full of the health-giving gas, ozone, which gives coastal areas their characteristic smell. Go on, boy, get your nose out of that book and open your lungs up!

THE "TRUTH"

The seaside doesn't smell of ozone - it smells of rotting seaweed, which releases a mixture of sulphur compounds. This is the odour which mid-Victorians mistook for ozone. Their error was great news for entrepreneurs in seaside towns; "Ozone Hotels" can still be found in Australasia. Ozone, an allotrope of oxygen, was first identified in 1840. For decades it was viewed by many medical scientists as a cure-all, which could be used in enclosed spaces, where the danger of infection was greatest, to neutralise disease-causing effluvia. Gradually, the miasma theory of disease was displaced in the consensus by the germ theory, and ozonisation fell from fashion. The myth of the ozone-rich sea breeze, however, has lived on in folklore. One thing's for certain: a good lungful of pure ozone would do your respiratory system irreparable damage.

DISCLAIMER Research into ozone as a water cleaner, less environmentally harmful than chlorine, apparently continues - so were the Victorians right after all? And is seaside air good for you, with or without ozone? If you know, send us a saucy postcard.

SOURCES There's a concise account of ozone's history and properties at The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering's site, www.atse.org.au: Does ozone make you sick?, by Professor Ian D Rae.



MYTHCHASER

In November 2001, a familiar newspaper filler re-emerged - the one about snails devouring the mail in pillar boxes, because they'd developed a taste for envelope glue. This story seems to have been around forever; can anyone make it stick?

LIONESS ADOPTS ORYX



AN ADULT LIONESS IN CENTRAL Kenya known as Larsen confounded the law of the jungle by adopting a baby beisa oryx, a kind of small antelope normally preyed upon by big cats. She came across the oryx (referred to as "Simon") on 24 December in the Samburu Game Reserve, scaring off its mother. Instead of attacking the defenceless calf, she adopted the baby, protecting it from other predators, including a leopard. She still allowed the mother oryx occasionally to come and feed her calf before chasing her away. The lioness would lie down to rest in the afternoon and its unlikely charge would curl up beside her.

On 6 January she led the oryx to

the river to drink. Weakened by two weeks of looking after her adopted baby, she fell asleep, failing to notice a hungry male lion, which attacked and killed the oryx. Patrick Muriungi, a receptionist at Samburu Lodge, said the lioness was grief-stricken when she awoke to realise what had happened. "She was very angry. She went around the lion about 10 times roaring, and then she disappeared," he said.

On St Valentine's Day, it was reported that Larsen had adopted a second baby oryx, but several wildlife experts suspected that this was merely a publicity stunt to attract tourists. [AFP] 7 Jan; D.Express, 8 Jan; Ananova, 16 Feb; Independent, 21 Feb 2002.

EARTH'S NEAR MISS

On 7 January, a hefty asteroid missed Earth by an astronomical whisker - 370,000 miles (595,440km) - less than twice the distance of the Moon from our planet (238,857 miles/384,393km). The space rock, designated 2001 YB5, and measuring between 720ft (220m) and 1,600ft (488m), was spotted by the NEAT (Near Earth Asteroid Tracking) survey telescope on Mount Palomar, California, on 12 December. It is on a 1,321-day elliptical orbit of the Sun, crossing the

orbits of Mars, Earth, Venus and Mercury.

A direct hit could have wiped out the UK and brought nuclear winter to a large proportion of the globe. The only known object that will come nearer to Earth is an asteroid called 1999 AN10 that will whizz by on 7 August 2027 - but many are only spotted a month or so before arrival. There may be more than 900 asteroids larger than 2001 YB5 with orbits that bring them dangerously close to Earth. D.Mall, Irish Times, 8 Jan 2002.

STRANGE DEATHS

A COMPENDIUM OF MACABRE DEPARTURES FROM THIS EARTH

PEOPLE ARE DYING OF FRIGHT.

A study by David Phillips, a sociologist at the University of California, San Diego, and colleagues has found that the number of cardiac deaths among Chinese and Japanese Americans is seven per cent higher on the fourth of each month, compared with the daily average for the rest of the week, an anomaly probably triggered by stress. 'Four' sounds like the word for death in Mandarin, Cantonese and Japanese; some Chinese and Japanese hospitals do not list a fourth floor or number any rooms four.

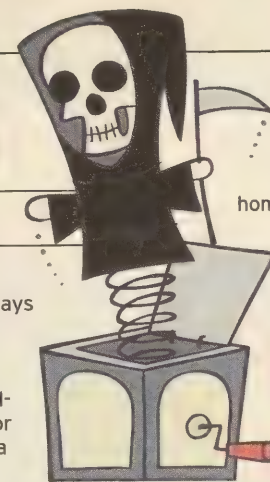
Phillips's team checked computerised death records for more than 200,000 Chinese and Japanese Americans and more than 47 million Caucasian Americans who died between January 1973 and December 1998. The overall increase in cardiac deaths for Chinese and Japanese people on the fourth was seven per cent. But for deaths from chronic heart disease, the figure was 13 per cent. "We call this mortality peak 'the Baskerville effect'," the researchers write in the *British Medical Journal* (vol 323, p1443).

In the Sherlock Holmes story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Charles Baskerville is confronted by a savage dog and has a fatal heart attack resulting from extreme fright. However, according to a spokeswoman for the British Heart Foundation, psychological stress does not directly cause heart attacks, but long-term release of adrenaline can tighten arteries, for example, which increases blood pressure.

Previous work by Phillips showed a complementary effect - people die less often than expected before important symbolic

occasions, and more often afterwards. "Chinese holidays move around the calendar and one can see that the pre-holiday 'death dip' moves around with the holiday," he said. He found, for instance, that there were a third fewer deaths than average in the week before the Harvest Moon Festival, with an increase of similar magnitude in the weeks following it. *New Scientist*, *Scientific American*, *Times*, D.Telegraph, 21 Dec 2001; *Dallas Morning News*, 7 Jan 2002.

A BRITISH TOURIST ON A ROUND-THE-WORLD trip died on 31 January two days after being stung by a tiny irukandji jellyfish (*Carukia barnesi*) while swimming off Hamilton Island on the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland. Richard Jordan, 58, from Driffield in Yorkshire was the first known person in the world to die after being stung by the fast-swimming jellyfish. Transparent and 0.8in (2cm) across, it has a sac about the size of a peanut and four 6in (15cm) tentacles covered in stinging cells that discharge neurotoxin when touched, causing very severe pain. There is no known antidote. Mr Jordan suffered a cerebral haemorrhage when the venom aggravated his heart condition and high blood pressure. At least two people have been hospitalised with heart problems since 1998 after coming into contact with an irukandji. *Times*, D.Telegraph, Eve. Standard, 1 Feb; D.Mall, Sun, 2 Feb; Guardian, 4 Feb 2002.

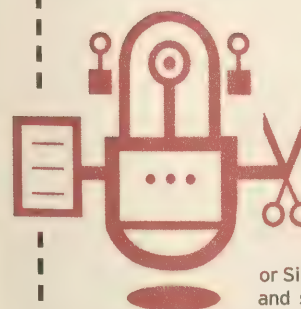


HAROLD SABER, 80, A WORLD WAR II veteran and retired pharmacist who told his family he would drive himself to the funeral home, kept his word. On 3 November, he was found dead in his car in the parking lot of a funeral chapel in Maplewood, a short distance from his home in Verona, New Jersey. "He was a very quiet man," said his widow, Sylvia. "He didn't like to bother anybody." *Newark (NJ) Star-Ledger*, 6 Nov 2001.

A PREACHER WHO CLAIMED HE COULD walk on water like Jesus died at the first attempt. Hundreds watched in horror as he was swept away. His body was recovered by followers from the River Kwipu in the Congo. *Sunday Independent*, 25 Nov 2001.

UKRAINIAN POLICE FOUND THE EMACIATED corpses of two girls, aged four and five, and their 52-year-old grandmother who they believed starved themselves to death in a religious rite. The blackened bodies were discovered in an apartment on the outskirts of Kiev on 8 November. The alarm was raised after the girls' mother crawled to a neighbour for help. *Melbourne Age*, 10 Nov 2001.

A MOB BURNED ALIVE A HUSBAND and wife in Indonesia's East Java province over claims that they practised black magic. About 150 people went to the home of the victims, accused them of casting spells on others, dragged them outside and set them on fire after destroying their hut. About 3200 police were sent to the scene and nine people were detained. East Java, a bastion of traditionalist Muslims, has a long history of anti-witchcraft violence. [AFP] 7 Jan 2002.



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To minimise the time spent on preparing clippings for a Fort Sort, we ask that you cut them out and not fold them too small. Ideally, send them flat in an A4 stiff envelope. Mark each clip (on the front, where possible) with the source, date and your name, so that we can credit you in the listing (right) when we use the material. For UK local and overseas clips, please give the town of publication. For foreign language clips, we appreciate brief translations. To avoid confusion over day and month, please write the date in this form: 11 Aug 2001. If you send photocopies, copy on one side of the paper only.

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Space Cadets

The Unarius movement believe that angels and aliens are guiding our destiny, and that various historical figures have reincarnated to help us along. Their founder, Ruth Norman, repeatedly prophesied a millennial mass-landing of UFOs, but never lived to see the day. **Dean Bertram** finds the Unariuns in good heart and recalls his encounters with Charles Spiegel, Norman's successor, shortly before Spiegel died.

On 22 December 1999, Charles Louis Spiegel (pictured below) "made his transition to the Spiritual worlds."¹ Up until his death at the age of 78, Spiegel had been the director of one of the most famous and long-lived UFO contactee cults, the Unarius Academy of Science. Known to his fellow Unariuns (as they call themselves) by the "spiritual name" of Antares, Spiegel had taken up the reins when the cult's co-founder, Ruth Norman, died in 1993. Spiegel served as her "sub-channel" since the early 1970s. Drawing upon Norman's psychic energies Spiegel would become the vessel for various extraterrestrial and spiritual entities. The conversations that followed between Norman and the channelled beings would be recorded on tape for their later transcription and publication.

Spiegel began consolidating his position within the cult during Norman's final days, nipping one potential coup in the bud and dismissing the objections of emerging apostates.³ Such decisive leadership abilities did not surprise those Unariuns versed in Spiegel's spiritual autobiography, *The Confessions of I, Bonaparte*, which details several of his previous lives, including the despotic leaders Napoleon, Pontius Pilate and Tyrantus (an aptly-named extraterrestrial emperor from the Orion star system).⁴ According to the book, Spiegel had even once incarnated as the archfiend Satan – an exotic pedigree for a Jewish boy from Toronto!

My own encounters with Spiegel revealed a figure who, while kinder and gentler than his previous incarnations might suggest, sometimes seemed equally crafty. I first met him at the Unarius headquarters in El Cajon, California. He was presiding over the Friday night meet-and-greet for The 16th Interplanetary Conclave of Light Symposium – this was their annual festival, spanning the weekend of the 15–17 October 1999.

Fifty or more individuals, mostly conservative in appearance, sat in a large semi-circle listening to a piano recital Spiegel had encouraged me to attend. Running late from a previous interview, I crept into Unarius headquarters and in whispered motions picked up my registration kit. Recognisable by the wispy white hair encircling his bald cranium, Spiegel sat to the left of the registration desk; a dreamy smile on his lips suggested he was lost in the music.

I introduced myself to Spiegel at the end of the evening's proceedings and he seemed genuinely pleased that I was in attendance. Academics and journalists who had visited the cult previously "hadn't done a good job", he lamented: "They didn't understand the Unariun teachings." No matter,

Spiegel had
once incarnated
as Satan



CHARLES LOUIS SPIEGEL COURTESY OF UNARIUS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE





Unarius in historical garb act out their previous incarnations

he knew I could do better. In a show of good faith, and to get me started along the path to enlightenment, Spiegel took me for a tour of the Unarius literature stacked around the room, and within a few minutes Spiegel was weighed down with a sizeable collection. Calculating the bill in my mind, I began working up the courage to tell him that such an extensive library was beyond my meagre finances. However, I soon realised that he was making a rather generous donation of a couple of hundred dollars' worth of Unarius materials and even offered to drive me back to my hotel.

Despite my suspicions, I was beginning to like Spiegel. Not only because of the free books and ride – courtesies that are eagerly accepted by the struggling student – but rather because of his obvious frailties; as we walked to his four-wheel drive, Spiegel tripped over his own feet and almost fell to the ground; later, driving towards my hotel, he nearly collided with oncoming traffic. These geriatric frailties, while potentially lethal, were comical and endearing.

While we sat in his car outside my motel room, Spiegel spent the next hour summarising the complexities of reincarnation and the benefits of Unarius past-life therapy. Although interesting in itself, much of what Spiegel explained was only of secondary significance to my research; I was far more interested in the

Unarius interpretation of the UFO phenomenon. That night however, I patiently listened to his spiel, safe in the knowledge that he had agreed to an interview later that weekend.

Saturday was filled with lectures concerning underground Martian cities and video presentations about Nicola Tesla (the deceased inventor who is revered by Unarius as the last earthly incarnation of the Archangel Michiel). Another video contained footage of past-life therapy sessions which, theatrically, require Unarius members, dressed in historical garb, to act out their previous incarnations. Unarius believe that nearly all an individual's fears and problems in this life are due to unresolved conflicts from a prior existence. The cathartic process of reliving certain events, Unarius claims, frees the individual from their residual negative energies.

Performing a musical interlude, the Unarius choir crooned altered renditions of popular songs. Bette Midler's *From a Distance* underwent a change in lyrics from "God is watching

us..." to "They are watching us..." – a hymn to the omniscient Space Brothers.

Sunday's events took place on a Unarius-owned property in the nearby hills, and everybody was assigned to a car for the journey from headquarters. At the last moment, Spiegel decided that he wanted the vehicles to drive in convoy, with his own four-wheel drive taking the lead. He also made an impromptu change to the planned route, opting for a longer – but more scenic – drive. A few of the Unarius rolled their eyes at each other when these changes were announced; no doubt similar ocular gesticulation took place shortly afterwards, when Spiegel made a wrong turn into a shopping mall's parking lot, taking the whole snaking procession with him.

Recovering from this accidental detour, the convoy headed into Southern California's scenic hills. We eventually came to a sign that spanned the roadway – "Welcome Space Brothers 2001". The occupants of each vehicle handed over their special boarding passes to be stamped by an attractive Unarius gatekeeper. Her outfit was a mix of those worn by space hostesses in Kubrik's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the cartoon futurism of *The Jetsons*. We had arrived at the 'Landing Site', a tract of land purchased by Ruth Norman to accommodate the arrival of an extraterrestrial space armada.

Later that day, I followed a Unarius-built



ON PARADE: Unarius Space Cadets on the way to the Star Center One landing site (above). Unarius Headquarters at Cajon, California (bottom right).

'nature path' that wound down the other side of the dry slope. Small bronze plaques dotted the trail, inscribed with words of wisdom from such spiritual and philosophical greats as Jesus, Socrates, Plato and, of course, Ernest and Ruth Norman. Even a past utterance by Spiegel had won a plaque. Halfway down the path I was joined by the man himself; he insisted that I take photos of the engraved quotations and asked me to read him some of their wisdom before we rested with several others under a tree.

Sanctuary from the sun was short-lived; apparently the 'Interplanetary Banner Procession' was about to take place. Several Unarius, using the tone usually reserved for senile but obstinate grandparents, made a futile attempt to persuade Spiegel to don a hat. A Cadillac led the parade, its roof adorned with a model flying saucer. Goose-stepping behind the saucer mobile were four trumpet-carrying heralds, all dressed in the same science fiction garb as the gatekeeper. Last came the 33 banner carriers, acting as surrogates for extraterrestrial leaders and the planets over which they preside. A white tuxedo'd MC announced each of the living effigies as they lined up before the audience: "Hello, Namir from Serrena. Welcome, Tal from Rallium. Denios from Planet Ray,

We arrived at the site of the landing of the Extraterrestrial Space Armada

welcome..." One banner stood out from the spacey litany; "Welcome, Ruth Norman of Planet Earth". Finally, as the four Jetson clones mimed blowing their horns to the blaring PA system, 33 white doves were released from a scaled-down replica of a flying saucer.

The day was filled with treats such as 'I was an Orion Space Ship Commander', a lecture explaining how so-called alien abductions are really just past life memories of torture and brainwashing suffered in the Orion Empire. Several hours later, after a large buffet dinner, the Unarius and I sat patiently in a tent awaiting the arrival of Spiegel. With lights dimmed and the earlier chattering silenced (we had been told to settle down), the only sensory stimulants were the sound of wind sporadically whipping the tent's canvas and the Mexican caterers yelling at each other in Spanish as they cleared an adjoining tent. The day's long programme and the heat of the sun had obviously taken its toll on some of the older Unarius; a senior gent sitting opposite me snored, his head lolling over the back of his chair.

After half an hour, Spiegel entered, now in a three-piece suit. Taking the stage, he lowered himself into a chair, removed his shoes, loosened his tie, closed his eyes and began channelling. Now Unarius channelling in no way resembles the spasm-inducing, eye-rolling, creepy-talking variety that I had come to associate with the concept. Spiegel just sat there calmly and, in his regular voice, delivered an hour-long Unarius homily. It was rather disappointing as, a couple of times, I'm pretty sure that he repeated, verbatim, entire sentences that I had heard him utter that weekend during non-channelled speeches and conversations. All that differentiated Spiegel's channelling from his usual speech was that occasionally, mid-sentence or indeed in mid-word, he would suddenly pause, as if there were a short break in transmission.

Channelling done, Spiegel took questions. Only one woman piped up, asking the identity of the channelled entity. Oops. Spiegel had neglected to mention that we had been listening to

Lycenius from the planet Vixall. With no other queries forthcoming, he sternly informed his obviously exhausted audience that they had better darn well think of some questions in the weeks and months to come.

I approached Spiegel. On reflection, it was not, perhaps, the most opportune time. Could we still do the interview? "Haven't I said enough?" was the violent retort. I was a bit taken aback, but remained calm and suggested that maybe we could talk tomorrow. He told me to phone him, and I gave him some space.

On the phone the following evening, still trying for the interview, the rhetorical question erupted again: "Haven't I said enough?" When I tried to explain that I had specific questions about the UFO phenomenon, he hurled another question of his own: "Have you ever had an experience yourself?" I told him that no, I had never had contact with any extraterrestrial or paranormal entity, if that was what he meant.

"Then how do you suppose to write about those who have?" Any remaining chance for an interview was rapidly evaporating, along with the last of my charm.

"Listen, Antares," I replied, "I'm an historian. I didn't fight in the Civil War either, but I'm still considered competent enough to write about it."

"But how can you judge people who have had experiences if you haven't had one yourself?"

Suddenly it dawned on me: to him, I was just another cynical hack having fun at Unarius' expense. The words of a journalist that I had conversed with that weekend rang in my ears: "You and I are the same. We come here, befriend these people, learn their secrets, but in the end we inevitably betray them."

Ignoring the unavoidable truth of those words, I tried to reassure Spiegel: "I don't intend to judge Unarius or any other group that I speak to this trip. My plan is simply to record different interpretations of the UFO phenomenon, not to prove whether they are right or wrong." There was silence. Then he said: "Oh, that's alright then."

Still, it seemed clear that Spiegel had lost all desire to give an interview. In the background, some other Unarius could be heard arriving. He had to go. So did I. Time and budget restraints would not let me hang around in El Cajon for yet another day, just on the off-chance that Spiegel would decide to see me.

"Well, maybe I'll come back and get that interview sometime in the future," I heard myself say. The weekend's earlier cheerfulness



The Coming of the Space Brothers



ALL IMAGES: UNARIUS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

OH SPACE BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?: The late Ernest and Ruth Norman, founders of Unarius (above left). A model of the landing site at Jamul, California, where the visitors will arrive (above right). The 33 planets forming the Interplanetary Confederation (below).

What is Unarius?

Unarius is one of the oldest and most-successful UFO contactee groups. Strictly speaking, the Unarius Academy of Science is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational foundation centred in El Cajon, California. The word Unarius is an acronym for Universal Articulate Interdimensional Understanding of Science. Members call themselves 'Unariuns'.

What do they believe?

Unarius teaches that humankind is being prepared for a momentous change in consciousness, at which point Earth will be invited to join the Interplanetary Federation as the 33rd planet. Earth, it seems, is a prison planet where beings who have done terrible things in previous lives on other planets are incarnated. Unariuns are encouraged to confess their past-life sins – often in costumed pageants – in order to advance themselves spiritually. To aid them, the Unarius leaders have channelled teachings from 'advanced beings' (ascended masters, rulers of higher planets, archangels and interdimensional scientists) explaining consciousness, the origin of life and our connection with galactic intelligence.

Since its founding in 1954, Unarius has evolved into a rambling and complex belief-system encompassing intelligent life on other worlds and in other dimensions, angelic beings, mental and physical super-sciences, intergalactic travel by huge flying saucers, channelling, reincarnation and redemption.

The Unariuns believe that once an individual becomes aware of his past lives (and some Unariuns claim to have been 'evil' personali-

ties) he can – with help from the Space Brothers – heal the damage done to himself and others. Ernest Norman claimed to have been both Jesus of Nazareth (he supposedly had the crucifixion scars to prove it) and Osiris. Ruth Norman is said to have lived 55 lives on Earth, including the Buddha, Socrates, King Arthur, Confucius, and King Poseid of Atlantis. Charles Spiegel, the last director, claims to have been Napoleon and Pontius Pilate.

To Unariuns, death is the next step in personal evolution, possibly leading to a 'higher' incarnation on another planet.

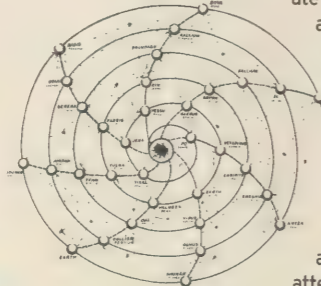
How and when did it start?

The early 1950s was the heyday of the flying saucer contactee movement and Ernest Norman, an electronics engineer, poet and clairvoyant, began hearing interplanetary voices and astral-travelling to Mars and Venus. While attending a Los Angeles psychics' convention in 1954, to lecture on 'Inner Contact from the Higher Beings', he met Ruth Marian. They married that same year and laid the foundations of what was to become Unarius.

Over the next 17 years, they promoted Unarius at UFO and spiritualist conventions and wrote more than 20 books. Ernest (known to Unariuns as the Archangel Raphael) had been the main channel for messages from

the Space Brothers. After his death in 1971, Ruth emerged as a charismatic and flamboyant leader and embraced the main channelling duties (as the Archangel Uriel), although others were also encouraged to become cosmic mouthpieces.

Ruth moved their headquarters to El Cajon, near San Diego, in 1972, where they can be found today. By the time of her death in 1996 (aged 93), she had published about 80 books, helped create almost 100 videos



and films, and established dozens of Unarius centres in other states and countries. Ruth's predilection for evening gowns, glitzy tiaras and magic wands attracted media attention. This campy fashion was matched by her sensational claim that an armada of flying saucers were due to land in 1974.

After her death, Charles Spiegel (aka Antares) became director. A Unarius student and teacher since 1960, Spiegel has authored or co-authored more than 30 books for the Academy. He died in December 1999, aged 78 and has already been channelled by Unariuns.

At its peak in the late 1980s, Unarius claimed an international membership of more than 10,000. Since the mass suicide of the Heaven's Gate group in 1997, media attention has been significantly more hostile, despite Unarius' declaration that it has absolutely no plans for mass suicide. In fact, Unarius emphasises the need to be alive when the Pleiadeans eventually arrive, to

take part in building the era of peace and universal education.

The mass landing

Ruth Norman's first great prophecy looked forward to a mass landing in 1974 of flying saucers from the Pleiades. At this time, emissaries of the Space Brothers would induct the people of Earth into "an alignment of 33 planets forming an Interplanetary Confederation for the spiritual renaissance of humankind". She bought land near Jamul, California, to build 'Star Center One', a landing-site for the off-world visitors.

When Ruth's Space Brothers missed their deadline, she simply claimed they would be coming later. The expected landing was rescheduled many times until it settled on the (then) conveniently distant 2001. While the world worried about the imminent 'Y2K' catastrophe, the Unariuns were looking forward to 2001 as the beginning of an era of universal peace.

This appointment, too, was cancelled. In a channelled message, the Muons from Myton said: "There is not a [new] date... We have to feel the waters out and make an individual contact with the military and the country leaders." Unarius currently maintain that a single Pleiadean space craft is already here, waiting invisibly. When the time is right, it will land on a Caribbean island – a rising portion of Atlantis in the area of the Bermuda Triangle – "carrying 1,000 scientists from planet Myton". This craft will be the harbinger of a further 32 flying saucers that will land, one on top of the other, to form a gigantic "interplanetary learning center" at Star Center One.



BOTH IMAGES: UNARIUS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

ENTHRONED: Ruth Norman as Uriel (left) and demonstrating just how the UFOs will land (right).

returned to Spiegel's voice: "Certainly, Dean, please do keep in touch".

Of course, now I'm never going to get that interview. Not unless I take up channelling.

Every member has the potential to become a prophet

The annals of kookdom seem set to record Charles Louis Spiegel as the last leader of Unarius. The cult's board of directors – basically 16 of the more senior members – have, since his death, decided to share this responsibility amongst themselves. No fuss, no power struggle, just a simple agreement for leadership by committee. Perhaps, as Alex Heard suggested⁴, surveying possible successors back in 1994, nobody with leadership potential remained in Unarius. Part of the reason could also originate with Unarius doctrine; apparently any member can channel entities from the Unariun Brotherhood and such messages seem, automatically, to receive the stamp of validity.

Max Weber, granddaddy of religious sociology, pointed out that as religions develop, there is usually a transition from a prophetic to priestly stage. Basically, the prophet is endowed with some type of divine charisma and acts as a conduit for the god by delivering sacred laws, holy messages etc. When the prophet dies, a priestly class usually takes over, formalising the existing messages into doctrine rather than receiving any additional insight.

The Ætherius Society – a UFO contactee cult formed in the 1950s – seems to have

followed this traditional pattern. With the death of founder George King in 1997, the Ætherius canon has been forever closed; though some members still claim to channel higher entities, these are not recognised as official transmissions. Legitimate communication has now become a one-way affair – Ætherians can send messages to their Cosmic Masters, but are unable to receive any in return.

With Unarius, however, every member has the potential to become a prophet or, perhaps more accurately, a shaman.⁷ When an elder dies, they remain accessible to the surviving members through spiritual communiqué. Indeed, in the days following Spiegel's death, "many Unariun students experienced mental contact with Antares through psychisms, dreams and inner attunement." One member, a Canadian resident who had previously channelled James Dean and Edgar Rice Burroughs, had "received two transmission from Antares."

On reflection, I may have learned as much about Spiegel by not interviewing him, especially now that I know he only survived my visit by two months. At the time, I perceived him to be a crafty old cult leader dodging my probing questions: now, I realise he was probably just tired. Organising the weekend, channelling in public for the last time and explaining reincarnation outside

my motel until midnight had probably all taken their toll.

As I glance at the thick Unarius tomes on my bookshelf, listen to the recording of that final channelling, and recall the spiritual jargon with which I was politely bombarded in a motel parking lot, I finally realise the truth of the rhetorical question Spiegel twice posed to me.

Rest well, Antares, in whatever spiritual realm you now inhabit. ☐

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

DEAN BERTRAM is based in the Department of History, at the University of Sydney, Australia. When not hanging with UFO cults, slaving at underpaying night jobs, or trying to produce his first independent feature film, Dean works towards completing his PhD thesis – *UFOs as God and the Devil: Religious Aspects of Flying Saucer Belief*.

RECOMMENDED READING

Alex Heard *Apocalypse Pretty Soon: Travels in End Time America* (1999)
Diana Tumminia 'How Prophecy Never Fails: Interpretive Reason in a Flying-Saucer Group' in *Sociology of Religion* (1998). A five-year study of Unarius (1988–1993)

James R. Lewis *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds* (1995)

RECOMMENDED SURFING

www.unarius.org
Official website of Unarius Academy of Science
<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/unarius.html>
University of Virginia 'New Religions' page on Unarius

NOTES

- 1 Letter from Unarius Academy of Science (not dated).
- 2 For example, see: Ruth E Norman: *Tesla Speaks: Countdown to Space Fleet Landing or George Adamski Speaks Again* (Unarius Publications, El Cajon, California 1974), vol 7.
- 3 Louis Spiegel: *The Confessions of I, Bonaparte* (Unarius Educational Foundation, El Cajon, California, 1985).
- 4 Alex Heard: *Apocalypse Pretty Soon: Travels in End Time America* (WW Norton, New York, 1999), pp55–61.
- 5 Max Weber: *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Beacon Press, Boston, 1963) pp46ff.

- 6 Louis Spiegel: *The Confessions of I, Bonaparte* (Unarius Educational Foundation, El Cajon, California, 1985).

- 7 An analysis of the re-emergence of shamanism in the cultic milieu appears in: Robert S Ellwood Jr: *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America* (Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1973), pp11–18.
- 8 Letter from Unarius Academy of Science (not dated)

IN SEARCH OF THE UNDERWORLD

According to ancient myths from all corners of the globe, a long-lost civilisation was wiped out by a catastrophic flood. New evidence of major sea-level changes at the end of the last Ice Age suggests that such stories may be more than just the stuff of legend. **GRAHAM HANCOCK** dons his diving gear and goes in search of flooded kingdoms and sunken cities. All photographs by **SANTHA FALLA**.

Five kilometres off the south-east coast of India, submerged at a depth of 23 metres (75ft) beneath the murky, shark-infested waters of the Bay of Bengal, an ancient man-made structure sits on the bottom of the sea. The structure is U-shaped, like a huge horseshoe; its periphery measures 85 metres (280ft) and its walls are about one metre thick and two metres high.

It was discovered by a team of marine archaeologists from India's National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in March 1991, working off-shore of the Tranquebar-Poompuhur coast of Tamil Nadu near Nagattinam. Despite this discovery, there has been no further exploration of the site since 1993 and the general impression has been that the NIO has not found any submerged structures there that are older than the third century BC. This is certainly true of numerous structures very near to the shore, usually in depths of less than two metres of water and often half-exposed at low tide. But the U-shaped structure is another matter altogether. Since we know that the sea-level has been continuously rising during the last 19,000 years, common sense suggests that structures now submerged by 23 metres of water must be much older than structures in just two metres.

Now, ten years on, I had the opportunity to see for myself. I knew that these were going to be big dives for me, that there was a lot riding on them, and that the mysterious U-shaped structure that I had come to see would be filmed for the first time so that people everywhere, archaeologists and non-archaeologists alike, could make up their own minds about it.

Glenn Milne, a specialist in glacio-isostasy and glaciation-induced sea-level change at Durham University's Department of Geology, had taken the location and depth of the U-shaped structure and concluded that "the predicted sea-level curve shows that areas currently at 23m depth would have been submerged about 11,000 years before the present. This suggests that the structures you mention are 11,000 years old or older.

If Glenn Milne's inundation dating for the U-shaped structure was correct, and if the earlier NIO marine archaeologists' reports that it was man-made rather than some natural outcrop of rock were also correct, then what was awaiting me on the sea-bed off Poompuhur was, quite possibly, the vindication of my quest.

It didn't matter much what the structure turned out to look like. For example, a ruined pyramid or broken columns - though archetypal antediluvian images in popular culture - were not in the least required. Irrespective of how dilapidated it might be, irrespective of how covered in marine growth and sediment it might be, even should it prove dull and unexceptional to the eye, all that I needed to prove my case were the remains of a structure that was monumental in scope, man-made and more than 11,000 years old, sitting on the sea-bed off the south-east coast of Tamil Nadu.

If the U-shaped structure was all these things, then it could not be explained by the orthodox model of history. And if it was all of these things, then the hitherto discredited Tamil myths of a great antediluvian civilisation called Kumari Kandam that had once existed around the southern coasts and islands of India might very well be true.

Extracted from *Underworld: Flooded Kingdoms of the Ice Age* by Graham Hancock, published by Michael Joseph at £20. © Graham Hancock, 2002. Photos © Santha Falla, 2002. www.penguin.co.uk



FISHY TALES: Local fishermen at work over Poompuhur's U-shaped structure, known as an attractive spot for fish (above); tales of such underwater ruins are common among the fishing communities along the coast, as the author discovered in places like Mahabalipuram (below).

We met up with our NIO friends – Kamlesh Vora, Gaur, Sundaresh, Gudigar, Bandodkar and others – on the beach and all piled into a small open launch to make the run to the point about a kilometre off-shore where the fishing trawler that the NIO had chartered for the diving was moored. Then we climbed on board the trawler, stowed our equipment, and headed out into the open sea.

As I was rigging my tank I noticed that half a dozen small local fishing craft had arrived here ahead of us and that the fishermen, oblivious to our presence in their midst, were cheerfully casting out their lines and hauling them in again with big silver fish attached. It seemed that here, as elsewhere along the Coromandel coast, the location of underwater ruins was part of the essential survival knowledge and folklore of fishing communities – just as they knew the tides and the monsoons – because an underwater ruin meant one thing for sure and that was a cornucopia of fish...

DIVE 1

Although the sky is now overcast, the water isn't cold; but it has a sickly and unnatural green hue through which light penetrates only dimly after the first few metres of the descent. Like blighted snowflakes, a blizzard of grey particles blows through the water on the current and I soon lose sight of the other divers on the line. I know that Sundaresh is just a few metres below me, but I can't see him. Five metres deeper, and the visibility suddenly begins to clear. The current seems to have

UNDERWATER RUINS ARE PART OF THE LOCAL FOLKLORE

slackened too, as sometimes happens at greater depth. Visibility continues to improve and at one point looking down the line I can see all

three of the NIO's divers spaced out at metre intervals below me, their yellow and blue tanks bright through the haze.

At about 18 metres (60ft), I begin to get the first sense of something large standing out from the flat and sandy bottom. At this moment it's just a looming mass of darkness contrasted to lighter surroundings and my eyes can't resolve it into a definite shape.

The only thing I can tell immediately is that it's big, squat and powerful-looking. In order to get any useful idea of its shape, extent and general situation, and even to form a first opinion of whether it might be man-made or natural, I need to be quite a bit further away from it than two metres. But if I do that, in these conditions, it rapidly fades from view, becoming just



a vague, undefined darkness on the sea-bed again, and then disappearing entirely into the fog.

I swim around a bit, now closer, now further away, trying to get perspective, looking for an angle. And then unexpectedly the whole scene in front of me brightens – the sun must have broken through the clouds – and for 30 seconds I am confronted by a massive wall of deeply eroded and pitted stone.

Although much broken and ruined, and incorporating a number of jagged vertical protrusions and step-like changes in level, I can see that the wall in general rises about two metres above the sea-bed to form the outside edge of an extensive platform.

It comes home to me, in this moment of illumination, that the structure has its own character – as many buildings do. It seems menacing but also forlorn, eerie but also sad. For as well as thick growths of unusually leprous marine organisms all over it, the shaft of sunlight shows it to be draped and tangled across its entire length in a strangling web of fishermen's nets – some made of old rope, ancient and rotting away, others in the sinister colours of indestructible modern synthetics – which seem to tie it down like the body of a Mafia victim sleeping with the fishes.

I find myself suppressing an involuntary shiver, as though reacting to an apparition, or a ghost, and swim back to find Sundaresh patiently waiting for me at the bottom of the line. We begin by swimming slowly south along the upper outside edge of the platform wall – if indeed it is a platform, which I'm now beginning to doubt. Rather than flat as I'd initially assumed, its surface at this point seems to be slightly concave and to be paved with a mosaic of small stones. Could it be the retaining wall of an enclosure – I know its supposed to be U-shaped – mostly filled up with some kind of sandy, stony aggregate?

The wall at this point is aligned north-south but soon begins to bend to the east to form the base of the 'U'. In another one of those little flashes of illumination as the sun breaks through the clouds I can see that we must have started our swim at the open end of the 'U' – the end spoken of in some of the NIO reports as "the entrance" – and that the length of the structure along this axis is therefore roughly the distance we have just travelled, about 30 metres (100ft).

Not far before the bend begins, I pass an opening to my left which I pause to investigate. It is a deep, narrow cleft with parallel sides a little wider than my shoulders slicing vertically through the whole height of the outer wall to penetrate the platform (or the stony fill, or whatever it is) that lies beyond.

And for the first few metres at least, this gully, or unroofed passage, follows a curving path that seems to duplicate, from within the structure,

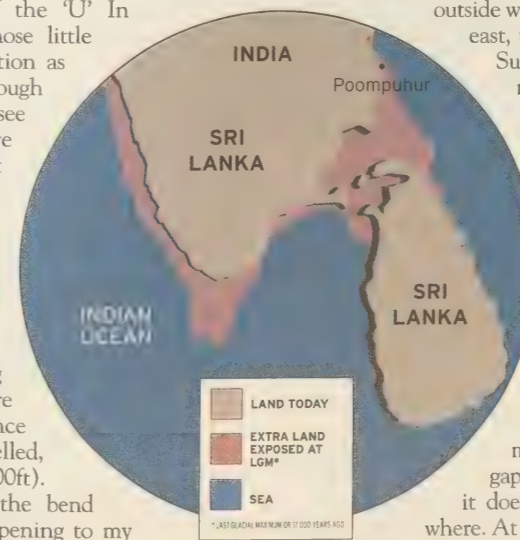


IT HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER – MENACING & FORLORN

the distinctive outer curve of the 'U'. Swathed everywhere with snagged and rotting nets, it is rough and broken in places, flat-floored and clean-edged, with an almost quarried look in others.

Making a mental note to spend more time here before the end of the dive, I turn back and resume my original course along the outside wall where it bends to the east, trying to catch up with Sundaresh. Looking for me, he meanwhile has swum all the way round and made his way back to the entrance where I eventually join him. But is it really an entrance?

What's confusing things once again is the stony aggregate that fills most of the structure. Its presence here makes it hard to see the gap as an entrance because it doesn't seem to lead anywhere. At the same time the thick retaining wall, generally in the range of two metres high, is at least a metre higher than that on either side of the gap – resembling a pair of gateposts. It also has a pronounced lip standing proud of the aggregate infill by almost half a metre – weighting the scales ever more in favour of the idea that the U-shaped structure must originally have been designed not as a platform but an enclosure, and that it certainly



POOMPUHUR: Diving on the U-shaped structure.

cannot be a natural formation. But is the enclosure wall hewn out of living rock, like the great carved shore temples of Mahabalipuram, or is it a built structure made of bricks or stone blocks?

We use up the rest of the first dive searching for the courses of masonry that Sundaresh is convinced he saw in 1993. Yet how are we to find them under the thick and tenacious armour of marine organisms that coats the wall? Several times reaching into shadowy eroded hollows to see what's inside, we must work our hands carefully around resident scorpion fish which flutter their poisonous spines as though to taunt: "Go on, touch me – make my day."

But we don't find any evidence of masonry. Not on the first dive.

INTERLUDE

During the surface interval, I fall into an argument with Gaur about the U-shaped structure.

His position had always been: the structure was large; its depth meant that it was more than 10,000 years old; archaeology knew of no culture anywhere in India capable of building such a structure 10,000 years ago; therefore either the structure was not man-made or it was not 10,000 years old.

I asked him if he'd changed his mind in any way over the intervening year and told him of the findings of Glenn Milne's findings that placed the structure's submergence at about 11,000 years ago. What, I asked him, did he make of that?

If anything, Gaur replied, this made his chronological problems with the data even worse: "11,000 years ago, whatever settlements there may have been here were at the Mesolithic level. And we don't have any data to suggest that such people can build this kind of structure... So I think – if it is man-made – it should be around 2,500 years old, maximum date. Not earlier than that, particularly in this area."

"And I think you're putting the cart before the horse," I interjected. "See, obviously I'm not an archaeologist and I come at this really from the point of view of a journalist. So my response to this structure is first of all the facts.

RUMOURS OF THE FLOOD

New scientific evidence suggests that stories of sunken kingdoms around the world – from Malta to Japan – may be more than just folklore and myth.



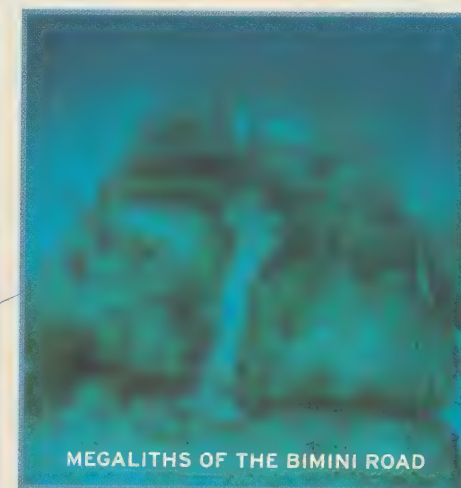
LAND TODAY
EXTRA LAND EXPOSED AT LGM*
SEA
ICE
* LAST GLACIAL MAXIMUM OR 17,000 YEARS AGO



SUBMERGED MALTESE CART-RUTS



UNDERWATER MEGALITH AT YONAGUNI



MEGALITHS OF THE BIMINI ROAD

GIGANTIC CATAclysms CHANGED THE FACE OF THE EARTH



ARTIFACTS FROM THE SUNKEN CITIES

Descriptions of a killer global flood that inundated the inhabited lands of the world turn up everywhere amongst the myths of antiquity. In many cases, these myths clearly hint that the deluge swept away an advanced civilisation that had somehow angered the gods. Such stories turn up in Vedic India, in the pre-Columbian Americas, in ancient Egypt. They were told by the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Arabs and the Jews. They were repeated in China and south-east Asia, in prehistoric northern Europe and across the Pacific. Almost universally, where truly ancient traditions have been preserved, even amongst mountain people and desert nomads, vivid descriptions have been passed down of global floods in which the majority of mankind perished.

To take these myths seriously, and especially to countenance the possibility that they might be telling the truth, is a risky posture for any modern scholar to adopt, inviting ridicule and rebuke from colleagues. The academic consensus for a century has been that the myths are either pure fantasy or the fantastic elaboration of local and limited deluges caused, for example, by rivers overflowing or tidal waves. The anthropologist J G Frazer wrote in 1923 that such stories "may contain reminiscences of inundations which really overtook particular districts, but which in passing through the medium of popular tradition have been magnified into worldwide catastrophes."

Unquestioningly following Frazer's lead, scholars to this day persist in seeing flood

stories as hugely distorted and exaggerated accounts of small-scale local disasters. My guess is that such thinking will not much longer survive the steady accumulation of scientific evidence that suggests that a series of gigantic cataclysms, exactly like those described in the flood myths, changed the face of the Earth completely between 17,000 and 8,000 years ago. At the beginning of this period of extraordinary climatic turbulence and extremes, fully evolved human beings of the modern type are thought to have been in existence

for 100,000 years – long enough, in theory, for a least some of them to have evolved a high civilisation. While much of the land they formerly lived on is now submerged beneath the sea and is as unfamiliar to archaeologists as the dark side of the Moon, how certain can we be that some of them did not?

In my experience historians and archaeologists will go through Houdini-like contortions of reason and common sense rather than consider the possibility that their paradigm of prehistory might be wrong, so I am not surprised that they have never attempted to investigate at face value the Atlantis tradition of a devastating global flood 11,600 years ago.

However, there are some scholars – trained in other disciplines and not hobbled by the same preconceptions – who are more open to the possibility that the flood tradition in general – and the Atlantis story specifically – might be rooted in the real events of the meltdown of the last Ice Age.

In brief, what is being suggested is that during the the long span of the meltdown – in addition to countless episodes of smaller-scale flooding – there were three global superfloods which have been dated within the following approximate time-bands: 15,000-14,000 years ago, 12,000-11,000 years ago and 8,000-7,000 years ago. There now exists a strong case that nearly half the total meltwater release at the end of the last Ice Age was concentrated into these three relatively short episodes, creating conditions of concentrated damage after long periods of stability – precisely the combination of

circumstances and bad luck that could have led ultimately to the destruction of an antediluvian culture.

Imagine the world before the flood. Seventeen thousand years ago, at the end of the Last Glacial Maximum, most of northern Europe and North America were buried under ice several kilometres thick. So much water was tied up in these continental ice-caps that global sea level was between 115 and 120 metres (377-394ft) lower than it is today. The antediluvian world, therefore, looked very different from the world we are familiar with. The habitable land-masses that modern civilisations have inherited from the meltdown of the last Ice Age only began to take their present form in the 10 millennia between 17,000 and 7,000 years ago.

Before that, areas that are densely populated today were absolutely uninhabitable due to the fact that they were covered by ice-caps several kilometres thick. Conversely, many areas that are uninhabitable today – on account of being at the bottom of the sea, or in the middle of hostile deserts – were once desirable places to live that were capable of supporting dense populations.

Geologists calculate that nearly five per cent of the Earth's surface – an area around 25 million square kilometres or 10 million square miles – has been swallowed by rising sea-levels since the end of the Ice Age.

What adds greatly to the significance of these lost lands of the last Ice Age is not only their enormous area but also – because they were coastal and in predominantly warm latitudes – that they would have been among the very best lands available to humanity anywhere at the world at that time.

Marine archaeologists have barely even begun a systematic survey for possible submerged sites on these flooded lands. Most would regard it as a waste of time even to look. In consequence, whether in Australia or Europe, the Middle East, India or south-east Asia, the enormous implications of the changes in land-use and rising sea-levels between 17,000 and 7,000 years ago do not appear ever to have been seriously considered by historians and archaeologists seeking the origins of civilisation.

MAP BY ALEXANDER TOMLINSON

A structure is there. It's at 23 metres (75ft). Is it or is it not man-made? I feel the structure has to answer that question itself instead of us simply replacing what it has to say with our preconceptions about the nature of development of culture in India at this or that period. We should excavate it and find out really is it man-made or not. Although I must say that I personally find it very difficult to believe that nature could have deposited a structure like that there. So the question I'm coming to is this. We know that certainly 9,000 years ago people were beginning to build quite large structures in some parts of India — for example level 1A at Mehrgarh in the Indus valley. Now, admittedly that's 2,000 years later than the proposed inundation date for this structure, but it's in the same general ballpark — back at the end of the Ice Age. So, my point is that if people were building permanent structures at Mehrgarh in the north-west 9,000 years ago, then what is the objection in principle to the possibility that people could have been building permanent structures here in the south-east 11,000 years ago on lands that were flooded?

"Well, because we don't see any such structures in the archaeological record for south India or any part of India 11,000 years ago!"

"But maybe that's precisely what we're seeing here, Gaur! We haven't seen it before because it's been underwater."

"From what I understand about Mehrgarh," Gaur replied, "if you go back to level 1A it was simply mud walls and they were concentrated in one area. But here — well, if you see the U-shaped structure, it is such a big one. And it is part of a complex with other big structures spread over a wide area. So it means if human beings made this then they must have had very great technology at that time. I don't think it can be compared with the simple mud-brick structures of Mehrgarh..."

"In other words, if the U-shaped structure is 11,000 years old and was made by human beings it would be rather disturbing for our view of history."

"Yes. Obviously."

DIVE 2

After descending the buoy-line we are back at the entrance. I swim south, as before, heading for the curving passageway near the far end of the 'U' that I'd noted on the first dive and forgotten to re-examine.

Sundares is a metre or two behind me, still looking for his courses of masonry and I'm steaming ahead when I feel him reach out and grab my fin. He points to something that he clearly regards as noteworthy, but whether it's because I am disoriented diving on an unfamiliar structure, or whether it's because of the appalling visibility, or because I'm in too much of a hurry, or because of my migraine, I just don't see what he's



IT COULD BE
RATHER
DISTURBING
FOR OUR VIEW
OF HISTORY

showing me.

Behind us Martin, the cameraman, doesn't either — but he keeps shooting, recording the relevant incident in 26 seconds of videotape that I'm not able to review until late that evening. The first 24 seconds show me being impatient and hasty. The last two seconds show something that I should under no circumstances have allowed myself to miss — something that I should have examined thoroughly on the spot and filmed and photographed from every different angle: a section of the wall about a metre high and clear of growth. In the lower right of the frame an ordered pattern of small blocks arranged in four distinct courses is visible. The blocks are brick-sized but irregular in cross-section and appear to be set in some kind of matrix.

But I'm blinded by my determination to explore that curving passageway, and keep swimming south along the west wall.

This time, I enter the passageway. Now I


want to see where it leads to, so I follow it all the way through and find myself in something like a room, very roughly defined, that seems to be free of the otherwise all-pervasive stony aggregate that so confuses the picture elsewhere.

Platform? Or enclosure? It would be a funny sort of platform that had an open-roofed room carved out in the middle of it — maybe more than one room for all I know.

For my money, therefore, this is yet another good reason to conclude that the U-shaped structure is an enclosure, that it probably has several internal walls that are presently hidden from view, that it has its main entrance to the north and at least one subsidiary entrance in the west wall, and that either through human or natural agency it has at some point been partially filled up with stony rubble.

On a whim I adjust my buoyancy by breathing in and ascend out of the 'room' to a point a few metres above the structure hoping to get a plan view — but once again the awful visibility defeats me and I can see almost nothing. Later, though, the videotape will reveal something else that I'd missed: a crucial eight seconds of tape shows more lines of blocks — dark and brick-sized, but more regular in cross-section than the others — emerging from the marine growth.

ASCENT

On the way up we do the routine five-minute stop at five metres to reduce our nitrogen levels. The water is very still and warm, the visibility worse than ever, and I drift in neutral buoyancy slowing my breathing, just thinking things through. It feels strange to have been privileged to see a structure hidden from human eyes for 11,000 years. A structure more than 7,000 years older than the Great Pyramid of Egypt. A structure for which no archaeological context exists. A ruined net-draped structure. A ghost in the water... 

RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED READING

Graham Hancock
Underworld: Flooded Kingdoms of the Ice Age (2002).

RECOMMENDED SURFING

www.grahamhancock.com
Hancock's website contains extra appendices to Underworld, many more photos of the sites by Santha Fatia and news updates on recent discoveries.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Graham Hancock is the author of a number of best-selling investigations of historical mysteries, including *The Sign and the Seal* and *Fingerprints of the Gods*, which have been translated into 20 languages and have sold over 4 million copies around the world.

How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

The Amazing Experience of Robert Heap



"Of course I place you! You're Bob Jones of Birmingham."

"If I remember correctly — and I do remember correctly — John Bagshaw, the supermarket man, introduced me to you at the dinner of the Bowls Club three years ago in October. I haven't laid eyes on you since. How is the motor business? How did the merger work out?"

The assurance of this speaker — in the crowded corridor of the Hotel Piccadilly compelled me to look at him, though it is not my habit to 'eavesdrop' even in a hotel reception.

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world"

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world," said my friend Bob Clark, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toast-master was introducing a long line of guests to Dr. Furst. I got in line, and when it came my turn, Dr. Furst asked, "What are your initials Mr. Heap, your occupation and telephone number?" Why he asked this, I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd the sixty people he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What's more, he named each person's occupation and telephone number.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, playing cards, prices, newspaper articles and anything else the guests gave him in rapid order.

"I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening"

When I met Dr. Furst he rather bowled me over by saying: "There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts, or something

I have read.

"You can do this as easily as I do. Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things.

"My own memory," continued Bruno Furst, "was originally very faulty. On meeting a man I would forget his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably over ten thousand men and women in the world whose names I can recall instantly on meeting them."

"That is alright for you, Dr. Furst," I interrupted, "you have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Heap," he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first of twelve simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system, and you will find it just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to. His Course did; I got it the next day.

When I tackled the first lesson, I was surprised to find I had learned — in about one hour — how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That lesson *stuck*. So did the other eleven. Indeed, I was so impressed I introduced Dr. Furst's Course to this country.

"My memory has improved out of all recognition"

Read this letter from Mr. J. W. Sullivan of London SW2:

"Since I started your course my memory has improved out of all recognition."

Mr. Sullivan didn't exaggerate.

Dr Bruno Furst's Course is fantastic! I can rely on my memory now. I can recall the name of anyone I have met before — and I keep getting better. I can

remember any figures I wish. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly. What's more my concentration has improved.

Now I am sure of myself, confident, and relaxed when I get on my feet at the club, at a dinner, in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

The most enjoyable part of it all is that I am now a good conversationalist — and I used to be as quiet as a lamb when I got into a crowd of people.

What's more, I have become more popular and influential.

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's amazing Course are available free on request. You will be astounded to learn what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in both business and social advancement will be enormous.

ROBERT HEAP

"Send for a free memory booklet - with proof that this method really works"

Full details of Dr. Furst's easy-to-follow method for developing a powerful memory are contained in a free booklet entitled "Adventures in Memory". To obtain your copy, and further proof that Dr. Furst's system really works, just telephone 0800 298 7070 free, send an e-mail (address below) or post the coupon below (no stamp is needed). Or write to: Memory and Concentration Studies, (Dept. FEM92T), FREEPOST, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6YA.

Free Book Coupon

To: Memory and Concentration Studies, (Dept. FEM92T), FREEPOST, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6YA.

Please send me your free book "Adventures in Memory", with proof that Dr. Furst's method really works.

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NO STAMP NEEDED IF POSTED IN THE U.K.

The God machine

Frankenstein's creation of a living being became a key image of modern science's quest to unlock the secrets of life itself. But, in 1854, an experiment far stranger than anything in Mary Shelley's novel took place when a New England clergyman married science and spiritualism in an attempt to build nothing less than a god. **ROBERT DAMON SCHNECK** set out to discover why... and what happened to the metal deity. Illustration by the author.

October 1853, on a hilltop in Lynn, Massachusetts, a group assembled to create the New Messiah. They had not come to pray or to praise God: they were actually going to build Him out of metal and wood under the supervision of spirits. When the body was complete, they believed it would be infused with life to revolutionise the world and raise mankind to an exalted level of spiritual development. The spirits gave their instructions through John Murray Spear, a former minister of the Universalist church and recent convert to spiritualism. Born in Boston in 1804 and baptised by his namesake John Murray (the founder of the American branch of the Universalist church), Spear has been described as a "gentle, kindly, ingenuous" man who possessed a beautiful simplicity and an idiosyncratic mind.¹

Spear became a minister of the Universalist church at the age of 24 and, by 1830, was married and had his own church in Barnstable, Massachusetts. Universalism teaches that all souls will be saved, stresses the solidarity of mankind and "sees the whole creation in one vast restless movement, sweeping towards the grand finality of universal holiness and universal love".² When his father died, the family was left poor; he may have been apprenticed to a cobbler and worked in a cotton mill, but these ideas influenced the course of his life.

Spear held reformist views on slavery, women's rights and temperance, on which he was frequently outspoken, upsetting his congregation. By the late 1840s, he had lost the Barnstable church and he went on to be driven from churches in New Bedford and Weymouth. In 1844, after delivering an anti-slavery speech in Portland, Maine, a mob beat him senseless, invaliding him for months. When he recovered, he operated a portion of the 'Underground Railroad' in Boston, helping runaway slaves get to Canada, and acquired a name as the 'Prisoner's Friend' for his work in improving penitentiaries and abolishing the death penalty.

While Spear crusaded in Boston, strange things were happening in rural New York which would completely change his approach to reform. The Fox family – a father, mother and two young daughters – moved into a farmhouse in Hydesville, New York, in December 1847. Immediately, they began hearing inexplicable sounds; before long, the Foxes found themselves in the middle of full-blown poltergeist phenomena.

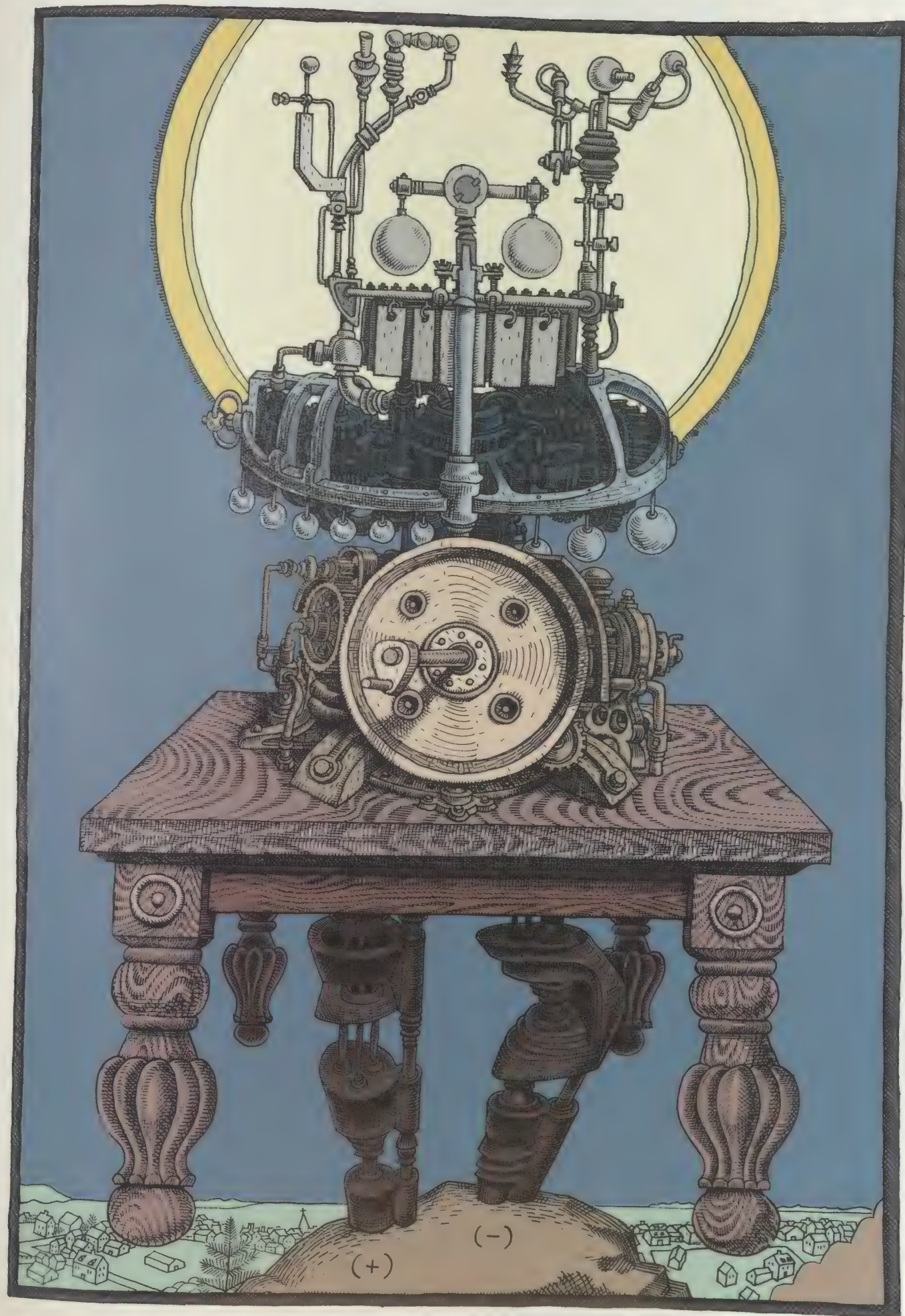
Months of noise, especially knocking sounds, exhausted the family. On the night of 31 March 1848, 12-year old Kate invited the 'ghost' to rap the same number of times she snapped her fingers. It did, and this display of intelligent control led to more detailed communication. The poltergeist claimed to be the spirit of a murdered peddler, and the two basic tenets of spiritualism were established: the soul survives death; and the dead can communicate with the living.³ The same day that Kate began communicating with the ghost, Andrew Jackson Davis – a visionary writer and healer known as the 'Seer of Poughkeepsie' – had a revelation that "a living demonstration is born". The age of spiritualism began.

The Fox sisters gave public demonstrations of their mediumship, and within five years spiritualism was everywhere. Countless amateurs experimented with spirit communication in home circles or attended séances by professional mediums, and hostesses were advised to introduce the "fascinating subject of spiritualism [at dinner parties] when conversation chances to flag over the walnuts and

They had not
come to praise God
but to build Him



GOD-MAKER: John Murray Spear.





wine." ⁴ Reformers were especially attracted to the way it challenged almost all accepted views, its lack of hierarchy and its promise of unlimited possibilities.

In 1851, Spear left the church and became a spiritualist. With the encouragement of his daughter Sophronia, he developed his powers as a trance medium and accepted guidance from the spirits of Emanuel Swedenborg, Oliver Dennett (who had nursed Spear after the mob attack) and Benjamin Franklin. Spirits led him on trips to faraway towns, where he was directed to cure the sick by laying on hands or making inspired prescriptions.

That summer he received 12 messages from the late John Murray and published them as "Messages from the Superior State". He followed this with a series of public demonstrations in which he entered a trance while spirits spoke through him on a wide variety of topics – including health and politics – and delivered a 12-part lecture on geology, a subject about which Spear claimed to be almost wholly ignorant. The speeches, however, were not well received, as it seemed to be the medium, rather than spirits, speaking. ⁵

Spear trusted his spirit advisors without reservation. Among their 'projects' was an experiment in which Spear "subjected himself to the most scathing ridicule from his contemporaries by seeking to promote the influence and control of spirits through the aid of copper and zinc batteries so arranged about the person as to form an armor from which he expected extraordinary results." ⁶

Despite all his efforts, Spear's reputation remained small, while the Fox sisters triumphed as famous mediums and Andrew Jackson Davis as a well-known visionary and prophet. This promised to change after a spirit-inspired journey to Rochester, New York, in

Lynn is a poor town, but its history is pure HP Lovecraft

1853 revealed to Spear his special mission.

Spear began producing automatic writing which proclaimed him to be the earthly representative for the 'Band of Electricizers'. This was a fraternity of philanthropic spirits directed by Benjamin Franklin and dedicated to elevating the human race through advanced technology. Other groups that made up the 'Association of Beneficence' were the 'Healthfulizers', 'Educationalizers', 'Agriculturalizers', 'Elementizers' and 'Governmentizers', each of which would choose their own spokesmen to receive plans for promoting "Man-culture and integral reform with a view to the ultimate establishment of a divine social state on earth." The Electricizers began speaking through Spear,

transmitting "revelments" that ranged from a warning against curling the hair on the back of the head (bad for the memory) to plans for electrical ships, thinking machines and vast circular cities. ⁷

The first, most important task, however, would be construction of the New Messiah ("Heaven's last, best gift to man"), a universal benefit that would infuse "new life and vitality into all things animate and inanimate". Spear – or the Electricizers

– chose High Rock as the place to build it. High Rock is a hill rising 170ft (52m) above Lynn, a town north of Boston. Lynn is now poor and unemployment is high, but it was once well known for shoe manufacturing and has a history that is pure Lovecraft, full of witchcraft, sea serpents, spontaneous human combustion and rioting Quakers. ⁸ Spiritualism received an enthusiastic reception in Lynn, and some of its most devoted followers owned a cottage and observation tower on the site Spear needed.

High Rock Cottage (shown above and on page 40 in 19th-century stereoscopic photographs) belonged to the Hutchinsons, who were both spiritualists and reformers. The cottage was a favourite destination for visitors, especially after 1852, when Andrew Jackson Davis witnessed a meeting of the Spiritual Congress from the tower and was introduced to the disembodied representatives of 24 nations. Spear had known the Hutchinsons when he was minister in Boston and allowed them to rehearse in his church when they began singing professionally. ⁹ Spear was given the use of a woodshed and work on the Physical Saviour began in October 1853.

Assisting Spear and the Electricizers was a group that included Rev SC Hewitt, editor of the Spiritualist newspaper *New Era*; Alonzo E Newton, editor of the *New England Spiritualist*; and a woman called "the Mary of the New Dispensation". The identity of the New Mary has never been clear. ¹⁰

Vivifying the Messiah was a four-step process that began with Brother Spear entering a "superior state" and transmitting plans from the Electricizers. Building it required nine months for construction (gestation) and in that time he received 200 'revelments' providing detailed instructions on the materials to be used, how the different parts should be shaped and the pieces put together. The group was not given an overall plan but built it bit by bit, adding new parts "to the invention, in much the same way [...] that one dec-

orates a Christmas tree." ¹¹

Spear's total lack of scientific and technical knowledge was considered an advantage, as he would be less inclined to alter the Electricizers' blueprints with personal interpretations or logic (what remote viewers might call "analytical overlay"). The parts were carefully machined from copper and zinc, with the total cost reaching \$2,000. (A prosperous minister then earned around \$60 a week.) ¹²

No images of the New Motive Power exist, but apparently it was impressive, sitting on a big dining room table. "From the center of the table rose two metallic uprights connected at the top by a revolving steel shaft. The shaft supported a transverse steel arm from whose extremities were suspended two large steel spheres enclosing magnets. Beneath the spheres there appeared [...] a very curiously constructed fixture, a sort of oval platform, formed of a peculiar combination of magnets and metals. Directly above this were suspended a number of zinc and copper plates, alternately arranged, and said to correspond with the brain as an electric reservoir. These were supplied with lofty metallic conductors, or attractors, reaching upward to an elevated stratum of atmosphere said to draw power directly from the atmosphere. In combination with these principal parts were adjusted various metallic bars, plates, wires, magnets, insulating substances, peculiar chemical compounds, etc... At certain points around the circumference of these structures, and connected with the center, small steel balls enclosing magnets were suspended. A metallic connection with the earth, both positive and negative, corresponding with the two lower limbs, right and left, of the body, was also provided."

In addition to the "lower limbs", the motor was equipped with an arrangement for "inhalation and respiration." A large flywheel gave the motor a professional appearance. ¹³ This, however, was only a working model; the final version would be much bigger and cost 10 times as much.

The metal body was then lightly charged with an electrical machine resulting in a "slight pulsatory and vibratory motion [...] observed in the pendants around the periphery of the table". ¹⁴ Following this treatment,



BLITHE SPIRITS: The Hydesville sisters, Margaret and Kate Fox (above left and centre), and the 'Seer of Poughkeepsie', Andrew Jackson Davis (above right), ushered in the age of spiritualism, starting an international craze and setting John Murray Spear on his own strange course.

Spear encased himself in an elaborate metal construction

THAT MACHINE.
It is known that a machine was alleged to be in process of building at this observatory on High Rock, a few months since. It was called the "Electrical Motion," or "New Saviour," and was said to be constructed under the direction of the spirits, and to be endowed with life! John M. Spear, an active agent in the production of the wonderful machine, gives, in a letter published in the *Spiritual Telegraph*, an account of its destruction, by a mob, at Randolph, N. Y., to which place it was removed, in a state of incompleteness, from Lynn. Mr. Spear says:
From the hour that it became publicly known that the association of electricizers had undertaken to introduce to the inhabitants of this earth a new motive power, the press and the pulpit have assailed, ridiculed, and misrepresented, until a public sentiment has been generated which encouraged the mob to assault and destroy it.
It was moved, as you know, to Randolph, N. Y., that it might have the advantage of that lofty electrical position. A temporary building was erected to shelter it. Into that, under the cover of the night, the mob entered, tore out the heart of the mechanism, trampled it beneath their feet, and scattered it to the four winds. I know that the friends who were engaged in constructing this mechanism, and those who cheerfully gave of their means to promote the work, will mourn that the world has not yet arrived at a condition when it could welcome a philanthropic effort of this kind; but thus it is. It did not wish the effort to succeed, and it determined it should not.

the Engine was exposed to carefully-selected individuals of both sexes, who were brought into its presence one at a time in order to raise the level of its vibrations.

Then Spear encased himself in an elaborate construction of metal plates, strips and gemstones and was brought into gradual contact with the machine. For one hour he went into a deep trance which left him exhausted and, according to a clairvoyant who was present, created "a stream of light, a sort of umbilicum" that linked him and the machine. ¹⁵

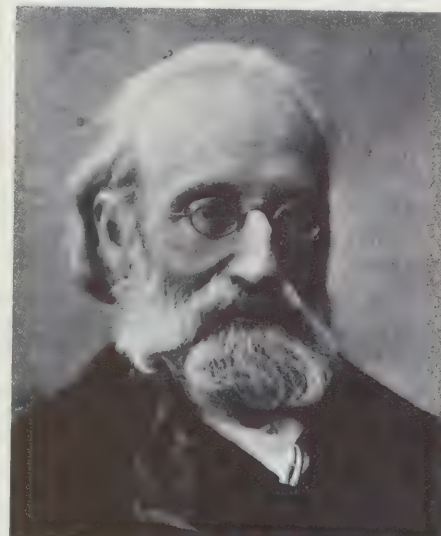
It was at this time that the New Mary

began exhibiting symptoms of pregnancy. The spirits instructed her to appear at High Rock on 29 June 1854 for the final stage of the experiment. On the appointed day, she arrived and lay on the floor in front of the engine for two hours, experiencing labour pains. When they ended she rose from the floor, touched the machine and it showed signs of... something. Precisely what happened is not clear; Spear claimed that for a few seconds the machine was animate.

The *New Era* was unrestrained: "THE THING MOVES", it shouted to its readers. "The time of deliverance has come at last, and henceforward the career of humanity is upward and onward – a mighty noble and a Godlike career." ¹⁶ Spear proclaimed the arrival of "the New Motive Power, the Physical Savior, Heaven's Last Gift to Man, New Creation, Great Spiritual Revelation of the Age, Philosopher's Stone, Art of all Arts, Science of all Sciences, the New Messiah". ¹⁷

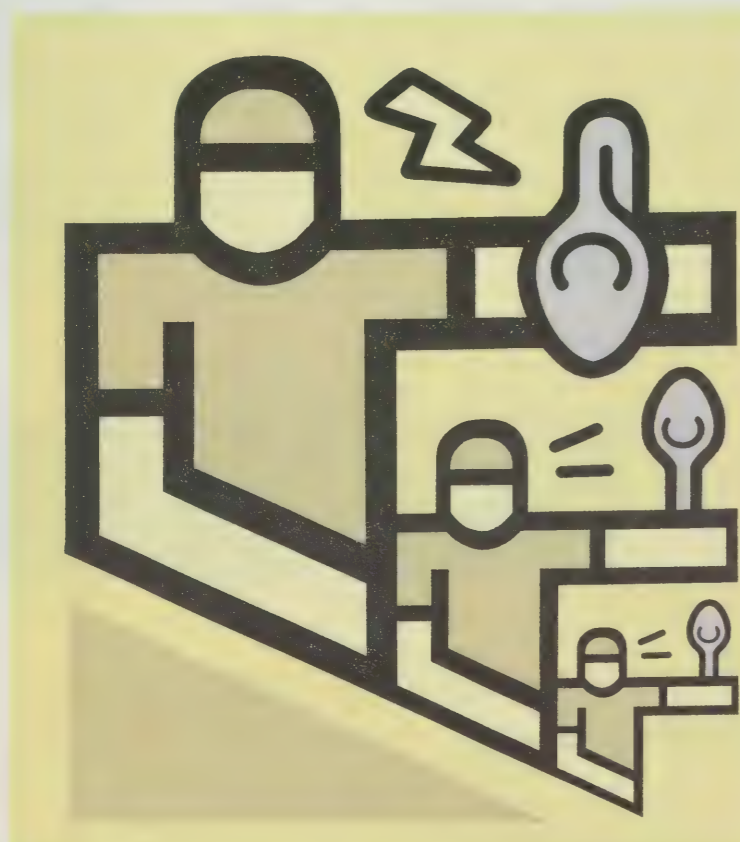
The machine's movements remained feeble, but this was attributed to the "electrical infant" being a newborn; the New Mary began providing it with maternal attention while it gained strength. It's hard to imagine what this involved. Despite the headlines, visitors to High Rock were unimpressed. JH Robinson – in a letter to the *Spiritual Telegraph* – pointed out that the New Messiah could not even turn a coffee-mill; ¹⁸ despite claims of success, AE Newton admitted there was never more than a slight movement detected in some of the hanging metal balls.

Andrew Jackson Davis wrote a long, careful critique of the whole project. Although he praised Spear as a man "doing good with all his guileless heart" and as a fearless defender of unpopular causes, he suggested that Spear had mistaken his own impulses for spirit directives or been duped by irresponsible entities into carrying out the experiment. Davis also felt that the precision and intricacy of the machine's construction was proof that higher intelligences were involved because Spear was "intellectually disqualified for the development of absolute science." He also praised the Messiah's excellent workmanship and construction; it didn't move, but it was



Paranormal Olympics

Fancy some non-contact arm-wrestling? **PHIL WALTON**, Chairman of ASSAP, launches a new competition for psychical abilities.



MATT PATTERSON

DO YOU EVER WAKE UP IN THE MORNING AND THINK: "I HAVE a special gift?" Do you think to yourself: "I have powers of extra sensory perception, I have powers of psychokinesis" and then go back to sleep filled with frustration, knowing deep down that you have no way of proving them to the world? Well, that excuse no longer exists – and hasn't for some years now.

In April 1998, you could have jumped out of bed and made your way down to the *Fortean Times* UnConvention. For it was there that a group of individuals interested in claims of the paranormal were conducting a running series of experiments to find out if you have what it takes to see inside metal boxes or move balances with your mind.

For the gamblers among you, they have were testing the ability to fix those dice or guess which way the coin lands. The prospectors in the audience have had their ability to find water or dowsing for electrical currents scrutinised. All this in the name of science, for ASSAP (the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena) is an educational charity looking into all claims of the paranormal.

In the ASSAP workshops – which have continued to take place at the UnConvention since 1998 – they have tried, through a variety of experiments, to show how probability plays a large part in what we perceive to be psychical ability. We have analysed the results from thousands of tests and found that the vast majority match the results we would expect by pure chance. I say vast majority, for we have had a few unexpected results. With the few odd results in mind, we thought we would try something a little different

this year and so we are announcing the Paranormal pre-Olympics.

The idea is to use the results from previous years' workshops to establish paranormal 'world records' and, through this year's workshop, coupled with Internet trials starting in the summer, to hone down the numbers of Psychic Athletes. The aim is to mount a credible, open, fair and hopefully exciting Paranormal Olympics in 2003, with the aim of finding winners in all the events and crowning an overall winner of the first Paranormal Olympic Games.

ASSAP will be running a competition at this year's UnConvention, asking people to submit a design for a Paranormal Olympics symbol to be used at all future events. So why don't the inventive among you see if your design can become the symbol of the games?

We hope to be able to run several hands-on heats as well as Internet trials in the Autumn for those interested in testing their abilities before the big event. So far the categories include: Dowsing, Zener card selection, map dowsing/psychometry, remote viewing, several tests of psychokinesis, extra-sensory perception and spoon-bending.

The rules will be fixed for the weekend trials in April, but we will welcome any suggestions for improvement of the experiments and any ideas to better test the athletes' range of abilities in the future. Some of the events are bound to have winners; for example the dice-throwing will produce a highest and lowest score irrespective of who enters the event. But the interest from a scientific point of view will be to see if a group of individuals, constantly re-selected for their high scores, can maintain their out-performance of chance over the long term.

Even more exciting, can the group of entrants as a whole produce a collective score that does not follow the classic bell curve shape predicted by probability? Because of the nature of the events, all participants will have to be paranormal decathletes entering all the events. However, it doesn't matter if you are the psychical equivalent of a couch potato: all are welcome to be put to the test.

There may well be more than one winner in each event since, unlike a normal athletic event where the fastest or furthest wins, it is the cumulatively improbable score that will make a person stick out from the crowd. Of course, when it comes to spoon-bending or making a pair of scales move with your mind, then merely bending the spoon or moving the scales at all will produce very high scores indeed. (An induced movement in scales has been observed twice in previous years, the first time causing the adjudicator to scream and the second making me fall off the desk I was perched on.)

Before you ask, you can't bring your own spoons or scales. We will be supplying our own standard equipment for you to bend or move, although you can bring your own dowsing rods or pendulum crystals for the dowsing and map-dowsing if you wish.

So, over the UnCon weekend and from the summer onwards, there is no excuse: get up, do the training, and put yourself to the test!



PHIL WALTON is chairman of ASSAP. His interest in the paranormal focuses on seeing if credible, repeatable experiments can reveal evidence of ESP and PSI. He is a programmer, gardener and inventor. He plays the drums, badly, and makes mead, which helps those who have to put up with the drums.

Foundation of terror

DAVID LANGFORD looks at unlikely science fictional handbooks for terrorists and wonders if Osama Bin Laden has really been reading Asimov's *Foundation* books or Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

YOU CAN TRUST SCIENCE FICTION FANS TO HAVE A RELIABLY weird angle on world events. Could there be a secret meaning in the name of this century's most infamous terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda? China Miéville and Jack Womack, SF writers with Arabic-speaking friends, independently reported the possible connection with an SF saga by the late Isaac Asimov.

Asimov's best-known novel sequence, half a century old, features the fall of a great but now decadent Galactic Empire. One man, Hari Seldon, has the vision to predict the decline of the West (as you might call it). So he creates an organisation on a remote and poverty-stricken world which will eventually take over and run the galaxy properly – once the Empire has finished its inevitable fall.

Seldon is so confident of his 1,000-year Plan that he prepares videotapes to be shown at key points in the future, bragging about his correct forecasts and the scheme's ongoing success. The dying Empire itself is annoyed by all this and, with its remaining military might, attacks the power-base set up by Seldon... but owing to historical inevitability, even the Great Satan itself can't upset the orderly progress of the Plan and the vision of its prophet.

The small but alarming coincidence is that this is Asimov's 'Foundation' series (Seldon's outfit is called the Foundation), popular among Arabic-speaking SF readers under its translated name Al Qaeda. Usually rendered into English as 'The Base', this can also mean 'The Foundation'.

So, was Osama Bin Laden inspired by Asimov's fiction to establish his Al Qaeda in an impoverished country, there to await and assist the fall of the West, issuing portentous videotapes the while?

Perhaps the strongest supporting evidence was supplied by Malcolm Edwards of Orion Books, who practises the mystic divinatory art of Anagramancy. As he remarks, "Osama Bin Laden" is a rearrangement of "I a Seldon BA, man", suggesting that his very name is based on the sacred Asimov texts. I forgot to mention that Asimov was a thoroughgoing atheist.

Womack suggested that the Foundation series may contain clues about Bin Laden's ultimate goals, "much in the same way a study of *Mein Kampf* would have benefited Adolf Hitler's counterparts a great deal if they bothered to read the book and paid attention to what it said."

The most interesting Foundation clue is that Seldon also creates a back-up organisation, the Second Foundation, whose precise location and purpose are a mystery that's central to volume three of Asimov's trilogy. Eventually (spoiler warning!), it turns out that the

Second Foundation has been concealed all along on the capital planet of the Empire itself – specifically, in the Imperial library. Boring from within.

Therefore, converting from Asimov's metaphor to the real world, we deduce that Bin Laden's back-up organisation, and perhaps indeed the man himself, can be found in the Library of Congress. Let's hope the USA doesn't impetuously bomb it.

(By coincidence another major SF author, Ursula Le Guin, wrote about the prolonged bombing and total destruction of the Library of Congress by religious fanatics in her 2000 novel *The Telling*. But that's another story.)

Whenever two SF fans debate a topic like this, there will be at least three opinions. My own SF newsletter's mention of the possible Foundation/Al Qaeda link rapidly produced a rival theory to the effect that Osama Bin Laden was more likely to have picked up ideas from another novel full of Arab and Islamic influences, Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

Dune's young hero Paul, you'll remember, is destined to more-or-less single-handedly topple a different and even more decadent Galactic Empire, which some readers find reminiscent of the House of Saud. Paul begins by getting adopted into a tribe of desert folk who are keen for a spot of jihad, and they give him a secret tribal name: "Usul, the base of the pillar." The base. Al Qaeda.

(Best not to think about the kamikaze coup in *Dune*, when a desert fanatic flies his aircraft into an Imperial troop carrier. "A reasonable exchange... There must've been three hundred men in that carrier." No, let's not go there.)

Sadly, students of Arabic poured cold water on the idea of a Bin

Laden/Foundation connection – although, oddly enough, it was revealed in *The Cult at the End of the World* by David E Kaplan and Andrew Marshall (1996) that Asimov's Foundation series was, indeed, used by the Aum Shinrikyo cult, those Japanese nerve gas merchants, as "the blueprint for the cult's long-term plans". Gosh!

Speaking of Japan... one of those Arabic students suggested tongue-in-cheek that the "base" in Al Qaeda – or Al Qa'ida – really refers to the scrap of awful Japlish computer-game dialogue that became an Internet catchphrase. In Arabic: *Kulu qa'idatikum namlikuha* means "All Your Base Are Belong To Us".



DAVID LANGFORD is an award-winning author, UFO hoaxer, noted magazine columnist and editor of the long-running SF fanzine *Ansible*. He can be visited at <http://www.ansible.demon.co.uk/>

The impossible stones

ALAN F ALFORD recalls his visit to the amazing, enigmatic ruins of Ollantaytambo in Peru



UP THE HILL BACKWARDS: How did the builders of the Temple of the Sun move 50-ton blocks up a mountain?

results of this exercise were filmed and screened in an episode of the series *Secrets of Lost Empires*. (BBC2, 19 June 1996)¹

The first task of the archaeologists was to demonstrate, using traditional tools and materials, how a relatively small stone weighing one ton (one fiftieth of the size of the genuine article in the 'Temple of the Sun') could be lowered from the quarry to the foot of the mountain. Unfortunately, the stone slipped from its ropes, and cascaded down the mountain side. It was lucky that no-one was killed.

The second task was to pull a similar one-ton stone across the river at a shallow point. Here, the team scored a notable success, the stone moving quickly across the gravelly river bed. Moreover, they were able to pull the stone across a pre-prepared cobbled surface at an impressively rapid speed.

The alert viewer of the programme now waited with baited breath to see how the stone might be conveyed up the mountain side to the elevated ruins

of the Temple of the Sun. Fat chance! At this point, the project was halted, and the archaeologists returned home, claiming rather ingenuously that they had succeeded in showing how the Incas built the site.

The reality, however, is that the mystery is far from solved. How exactly does one convey a one-ton stone – or, more to the point, a 50-ton stone – up the side of a steep and rugged mountain?

Admittedly, there are signs of a ramp at the foot of the Ollantaytambo mountain, along with a number of 'tired stones' lying nearby. But this evidence explains only those stones that did not make it up the mountain side, and tells us nothing about the stones that did. Intriguingly, the Spanish historian Garcilaso de la Vega described in his chronicles an attempt by an Inca leader to pull a large stone up the mountainside of Ollantaytambo.² However, despite harnessing the strength of 20,000 men, the project was doomed to failure. According to de la Vega, the stone broke loose from its ropes and rolled down the mountain side, killing thousands of people. Somehow, over the centuries of Andean civilisation, the art of stone-moving had been forgotten.

In summary, as things stand today, the 50-ton stones of the Ollantaytambo temple represent a seemingly impossible achievement, and the Temple of the Sun stands as a reminder of how little we really know about ancient megalithic science. Contrary to the claims of BBC television, at least one lost empire has kept its secrets intact.

REFERENCES

1 A written account of this and other similar projects appeared in a book entitled *Secrets of Lost Empires*, M Barnes et al, BBC Books, 1996.

2 Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, Orion Press, New York, 1961.

PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS TO 'FORTEAN TRAVELLER' AT THE EDITORIAL ADDRESS OR EMAIL TO DAVID.SUTTON@IFMGAGS.COM



Alan F Alford is the author of several books on ancient mysteries. His latest, published by Eridu Books, is *The Atlantis Secret: A Complete Decoding of Plato's Lost Continent* (see <http://www.eridu.co.uk>).

IN MAY 1996, I JOINED AN EXPEDITION TO SOUTH AMERICA to carry out research into the ancient megalithic ruins which lie scattered throughout the land. Among the many highlights of this expedition was a visit to the ruins of Ollantaytambo in Peru – a site that truly encapsulates the mystery of the megaliths.

The small town of Ollantaytambo is situated some 40 miles (64km) north-west of Cuzco in the Urubamba Valley – the so-called 'Sacred Valley' of the Incas. Above the town, a series of fortified terraces rise steeply up the mountain side, whilst at the foot of the mountain large stone monoliths intrigue the visitor with bewildering designs, featuring cut-out niches and perfect 'inside edges'. Ascending the terraces, one comes across row upon row of outstanding megalithic walls – arguably the finest in all of Peru.

Perched on the Ollantaytambo mountainside, high up on a narrow ridge, amidst the fortified terracing, there lies one of the most enigmatic megalithic structures of the ancient world – the so-called 'Temple of the Sun'. This temple is fronted by six enormous monoliths, carved out of red porphyry, which are notable for their huge size (over 13 feet/4m high) and weight (some 50 tons apiece) and for their unusual straight sides and 'fill-in' spacers (a change from the usual multi-faced joints and bevelled edges). How these stones were shaped so precisely is a mystery, for the stone – red porphyry – is reputedly as hard as granite.

But the greatest mystery of Ollantaytambo is how the 50-ton stones of the Temple of the Sun were moved to their present location and elevation, since the quarry from which they came has been identified as Chachicata, which lies four miles (6.4km) away across the valley on the opposite mountain side. In order to erect the six stones, it would have been necessary to cut them from the quarry, take them down the steep mountain slope, transport them across a river, and then move them up another steep mountain slope to the ridge upon which the temple was built. How on earth could an ancient people have accomplished such a formidable task?

Archaeologists believe that Ollantaytambo was constructed by the Incas, whose civilisation lasted from around AD 1100 to 1532. Accordingly, it is theorised that the megalithic stones were cut and moved using nothing more than primitive tools and materials, and human muscle power.

In 1996, a group of archaeologists travelled to Ollantaytambo in an attempt to explain once and for all the secrets of its construction. The



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JFK PUZZLES LIVE ON

Don Ecker does a disservice to Kennedy assassination research by claiming that Bill Cooper's notion – that the driver of President Kennedy's car may have been involved in the conspiracy – has been disproven [FT155:38]. Questions surrounding the driver's actions remain unanswered, as do questions about the authenticity and veracity of any copy of the Zapruder film. Don did a couple of well written articles for FT on the history of Cooper's involvement [FT121:40-43, 122:28-31], but unfortunately he has not resolved these issues. To readers wanting further information, I recommend "The Medical Case for Conspiracy" chapter in the new Paraview book, *Trauma Room One: The JFK Medical Coverup Exposed* (www.paraview.com).

KENN THOMAS
Steamshovel Press, PO Box
210553, St. Louis, MO 63121,
USA

GIANT WORM

Whilst digging holes for a stile in Cherry Willingham, near Lincoln, we drove a few worms out with our noise. One particular worm was well on its way to 2ft [60cm] long, maybe even more, and was as thick as my index finger. I wish I had measured it, or even kept it for a while to prove to people it was real. As it was, I just stood open-mouthed as it went across my path and under a high fence. It was definitely an earthworm, wriggly and pink, although I first mistook it for a snake as it was so huge.

I don't know how big they get – it could have been the granddaddy or the little brother... I've seen *Tremors*! Do any readers know the record for the biggest earthworm found in Britain?

KIRSTY MORRISON
Grantham, Lincolnshire

WEIRD WEDNESDAY

Today, Wednesday, 23 January, has been a rather fortan day for me. At around 3.30pm, while I was round at my friend Simon's house, his mobile phone rang with an incoming call from my

home number. He tried to pick up the call, but was unable to get connected. I rang my house to see if my mother had called, but she said she hadn't used the phone.

Then at about 7.15pm, Simon and I were driving back from Delamere Forest and passed a petrol station with a large screen hung up on the forecourt. We drove on and a few moments later we passed the same place again. It's possible that we drove in a circle, but as the road was straight I cannot see how this was possible. It was truly strange.

LIAM HERATY
Little Sutton, South Wirral

KORAN STORAGE

Your report about the "three million" Korans stored in "two miles" of tunnels [FT155:7] looks a bit doubtful. This would amount to 284 Korans per foot of tunnel. If we generously allow 15ft of vertical tunnel wall for storage purposes (presuming the Korans are not stored in the ceiling or on the floor), that requires that 19 Korans be stored against every square foot of tunnel wall. Seems a bit cramped to me.

CUYLER BROOKS
by email

LOSING AN HOUR

My family has a summerhouse in the Aland Islands archipelago, situated between Finland and Sweden. One afternoon some-

time between 1965 and 1969 I and my neighbour took our small boat, as we had many times before, and went duck-hunting to an island about 10 minutes (by boat) from our houses. My neighbour's wife told us to be back at 7pm for dinner. We had no luck with our duck-hunting, and we were very bored sitting there on the shore. Both of us had watches and we checked the time constantly, waiting for dinnertime.

At 6.40pm we took our rifles and other stuff, and headed home for dinner. It was a beautiful day with a calm sea and we entered the kitchen expecting it to be exactly 7pm. My neighbour's wife, however, asked why we were so late and pointed to the kitchen clock which showed 8pm. We laughed and said the clock was wrong, but we found our watches both showed 8pm, which was simply impossible because the trip by boat took only 10 minutes. We had lost exactly an hour. I am still wandering about it 30 years later.

BJORN BORG
Helsinki, Finland

FAIR PLAY FOR BARRACUDA

"Infamously savage species" indeed! [FT155:22]. Barracuda cause less harm to humans than the English Weever fish. They chase small, silvery moving objects like fish or fishermen's lures with great readiness. In the normal course of events, the only object they are likely to encounter of human dimensions

is a shark, which would happily eat them – so they don't attack things of that size. They may be toothy, but they're not stupid.

If a human were dumb enough to invade their territory whilst streaming blood, it is possible that the scent might trigger a "that's food" reaction sufficient to overcome their normal caution. You can't really blame them for that – but "infamously savage" they are not.

TREVOR JONES
by email

COMPUTER BUGS

Regarding the origin of the term "computer bug" [Mythconceptions 38, FT150:28], here is a passage on the subject from Ira Flatow's *They All Laughed*...

"Computer folklore says that when ENIAC, the country's first general-purpose electronic computer, was finished in November 1945 it had so many warmly glowing vacuum tubes that moths were a constant nuisance. They commonly flew into the machine, according to the stories, and a single moth in a futile mating dance with a vacuum tube could bring ENIAC to a sudden halt. Is there any wonder, then, that the word bug came to describe a problem that upsets a computer and debugging to describe the process of fixing those problems?"

"It's a great story. And one that is only slightly ruined by a few facts. First, ENIAC was housed in a sealed, air-conditioned room. A moth didn't stand a chance of getting in. Second, while ENIAC did malfunction at times, technicians can't remember ever using the word bug. The word intermittent was a favorite. (Intermittent was, and is, commonly used to describe electrical wiring that is loose. It's on, it's off, it's on again.)"

"So much for the bad news. The good news is that a moth was involved in crashing a computer on September 9, 1945, just two months before ENIAC began operating. This time the killer moth flew into the works of the U.S. Navy's Mark II, a room-sized calculator chock-full of switches and relays instead of vacuum tubes. In an un-air-conditioned

room in Harvard University, the moth made its way into an open window and thence into a relay. Jammed between the contacts, the moth was beaten to death by incessant toggling of the relay switch.

"Only when the moth brought the enormous calculator to a halt did the operators look for the problem. Finding its broken body, they removed the moth with a pair of tweezers, entered the incident in a log book, and Scotch-taped the moth to the entry to silence the snickers of all the Doubting Thomases in the lab... After that, whenever the Mark II was down for repairs, programmers described the process as debugging." [A photograph of the log entry, complete with moth, can be found in Flatow's book.]

BRANDON BLAHNIK
San Diego, California

INSECT POWER

Alex Kashko seems a bit too eager to discount the role played by insects in shaping reality [FT151:48-49] because "the sheer number of insects on the planet would create a very different planetary environment." Who's to say that without the beliefs of the insects we wouldn't be living on a very different world, and that reality as experienced is the construction of little six-legged worshippers who fear the coming-of-the-size-nine-shoe? Is the shamanic dance of the Moth-Dervishes solely for our benefit? Or maybe we're all figments of the amoeba's dark imagination.

NEIL RHIND
Elgin, Morayshire

NEW GOWER GHOST

Further to my letter "Monk Departs" [FT151:54] we have a new haunting to report. It began a week or two after the departure of Brother Doli, our ghostly Welsh Monk. One Friday morning I looked out on our patio at the side of our house, and saw a young girl bending down, stroking what appeared to be our cat. I was expecting someone about half an hour later and remembered thinking that she was early and very young.

I waved and indicated that I was going towards the outside door. She stood up and waved back, and I noticed that she was dressed in a long smock dress and wearing a blue cloak. She was also heavily pregnant, which surprised me. It took me about 10 seconds

SIMULACRA CORNER



Here's the true face of Granny Smith, from an apple bought in Dunganon, Co. Tyrone, by Jason Devlin of Wigan, Lancashire.

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images. Send them to the editorial post box (with a stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon) and we'll pay a fiver or ten dollars for any we use.

to exit the back door onto the patio, only to find that she and the cat were gone. In my opinion it was virtually impossible for anyone to disappear that quickly without my seeing them go, especially in an advanced state of pregnancy! I searched everywhere, and even asked a workman doing a job in our lane if he had seen anyone – which he hadn't. I was really puzzled and it was only when I recounted this story later that it was suggested that I might have seen a ghost! Incidentally, the cat had been upstairs all that time keeping my son, John-Paul, company.

We have a tombstone in our garden, of unknown origin, resting against the wall of the house. It reads "Jane Jones Aged 15 1778". I wondered if it was her that I had seen. As if to confirm this thought we began finding the word Jane on the stonework of our walls, inside and out. We also discovered that e-mails we sent sometimes had the word Jane concealed in the sentences! Jane has been etched into the lawn and carved into the holly tree. The carving looked as if it had been there many years, but we knew that it had not!

Our local town's website has our story, and when I updated it to include the Jane haunting I had a letter, minus an address, a few days later. It was signed by someone called Pete, who claimed to have seen the girl I described, standing on our patio. He said that he had been with a friend, fishing in the river, which is the other side of the garden wall. They should not have been there due to the Foot and Mouth

regulations in force at the time, hence the lack of address. His friend could not see the girl and accused him of being drunk! Pete said that he had only imbibed three lagers. The latest haunting is not as spectacular as the last, but appears to be benign.

A photograph, fairly recently developed, shows a lot of what looks like smoke in our lounge. The amount of smoke would certainly have necessitated a call out of the fire brigade. The smoke was obviously not apparent when I took the photo in March 2001. I showed it to John-Paul, who immediately said, "That's Brother Doli going, Mum".

ROSE-MARY GOWER
Treuddyn, Flintshire



LOGGING ON

Espen Samuelsen's "In Search of the Norwegian Nessie" [FT154:44] refers to the emblem of Rømskog as "suggestively serpentine" when it has more to do

with the local lumber industry. A website on international civic heraldry states: "The arms show a pair of tongs used to lift logs. As forestry is the main source of income for the municipality it was considered an appropriate symbol for the municipality."

[<http://www.ngw.nl/int/nor/r/romskog.htm>] A two-person version of this device is seen at: www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil/products/webpdf/tramans/bookchunks/14256_ch48.pdf

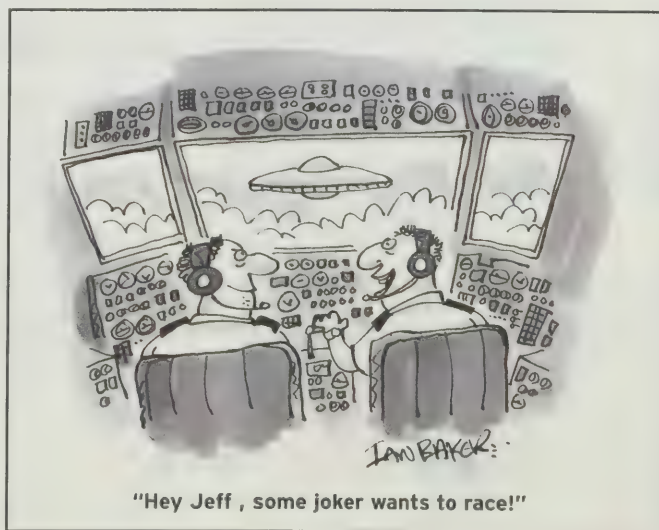
It is notable that the emblem is shown in FT along with a carved image of the monster, as Professor Munthe-Kaas identifies a "swamp gas filled log" as the source of at least some of the monster sightings – more than likely as the lake is used to float logs for the local industry and would contain a large number of these rotting, gas-filled monsters-in-waiting.

BLAIR DOWELL
Vancouver, British Columbia

FASTIDIOUS CAR THIEVES

Many years ago, about 1974 to be exact, my father told me a story about a man who stole a new Rolls Royce. Several months later the thief returned the car in perfect running order, with a service history and a note about the repaired clock. I recently overheard a conversation between two of my pupils. The conversation revolved around the same story that my father told me, but by now the Rolls had turned into a Ford. This sounds like an urban legend, but does anybody know how far it goes back?

JON BEALEY
Newton Abbot, Devon





SOKKA GAKKAI



In the side panel to the feature "Waiting for the end" [FT154:38], John Paul Catton identifies the Soka Gakkai as a "pseudo-Buddhist sect... founded in 1937". The Soka Gakkai (Society for Creation of Value) is a layperson's organisation for people practising a variety of Buddhism established by the priest Nichiren Daishonin (AD 1222-1282).

Nichiren strictly based his teaching on the Lotus Sutra, and Soka Gakkai members study the same sutra today, which is a direct teaching of the Buddha, so the Soka Gakkai practises a teaching which has remained unchanged for 2,500 years, a Buddhism almost austere in approach, and definitely not "pseudo-Buddhism."

Catton also states that Nichiren "preached a doctrine of 'final war' against the Christian West." In fact, Nichiren was completely unaware of Christianity. He did predict the Mongol Invasion that occurred in his lifetime and was aborted by a storm at sea. He also stated that,

according to the Buddha, Buddhism would move from the East to the West over a period of thousands of years, which it has.

The most famous writer and spokesman for the Soka Gakkai, Daisuke Ikeda, travels the world speaking out for peaceful dialogue and tolerance between leaders of nations and religious groups. The Soka Gakkai is pacifist and a member of the United Nations as a non-governmental organisation.

KRYS CALL
Santa Cruz, California

I am no supporter of Soka Gakkai, but I would like to know how on earth Nichiren ever preached a doctrine of final war against the Christian West, given his absolute ignorance of Christianity. Knowledge of Christianity only reached Japan in the 16th century through the missionary work of St Francis Xavier and others. Soka Gakkai members, and I have known a few, are actually quite dismissive of Nichiren and like to place the accent on the 'great work' of Daisuke Ikeda in his reinterpretation of the 13th century school. Pseudo-Buddhists and militaristic to boot.

A number of groups in Japan claim that one of the lost tribes of Israel managed to make it to their shores and that the Ark of the Covenant is to be found in the Ise Shrine. One of these groups, the fairly benign Makuya www.makuya.or.jp/eng/, are a kind of Christian Jewish Pentecostals. However, this group

certainly have no time for the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

The idea that the racial and divine origins of the Japanese are pseudo-biblical comes chiefly from the writings of two Western doctors.

During the time of the Tokugawa Shogunate, of the Western powers, only the Dutch pursued trading with Japan. Confined to a small trading island in Nagasaki, a few were fortunate enough to journey outside the walls. The first of these was the German doctor Engelbert Kaempfer who wrote his *History of Japan* upon his return. Published in 1727, this authoritative book, covering a vast range of subjects, contained some speculation on the origins of the Japanese. Kaempfer claimed that since they were, in his opinion, so markedly different in character and habit from the Chinese, they could not possibly be related. He concluded that the Japanese are descended from the Ancient Babylonians.

Secondly, Philipp Von Siebold, a doctor working for the Dutch East India Company in the 1820s, made the claim that the Japanese are certainly Jewish in origin. These two lazy imaginings of Western origin came back into Japan from the mid-19th century onward, and became an enduring myth among various left-field groups.

Following the arrival of American gunboats offshore in 1853, Japan embraced Western technology and learning with incredible zeal. At the same

time, Japan learnt from the West about the nature of Empire. Westerners built their navies and taught them that they really couldn't be a credible nation without annexing some foreign territories. Japan sought not only to invent itself as a martial power, but to distinguish itself from the rest of East Asia. Japan would be the great power and usurp China's long-held claim to the throne. Japan would in effect become the Central Kingdom, one strengthened through its contact with the West.

With the influence of Western social Darwinism and good old Victorian snobbery, many leading Japanese could no longer consider that they were East Asian in origin. It was in part embarrassment and in part racism. The growth of the imperial cult that claimed divine status for the emperor and nation helped ease the burden.

The Japanese were effectively under the protective wings of a god and it was only in 1945, when Hirohito finally admitted that he wasn't divine, that this bizarre experiment in mind-control began to unwind. The psychic shock to the Japanese of defeat in the Pacific War was profound. The all-encompassing belief system lay in tatters and the after-effects linger on to this day. There is nobody alive in Japan now who can remember the time when most people could barely name the emperor or even be bothered to find out.

PATRICK KNILL
London

hedge tripped the stalling low-flying aircraft and it landed upside-down.

A local farmer was first on the scene, horrified to find he could not get near the wreckage for the flames, and both crew were dead. He telephoned for help and went back to the wrecked aircraft to be astonished and totally unbelieving when he saw a black cat walk out seemingly unscathed from under the funeral pyre.

It could not have been under the aircraft when it came down, and would surely have run away in fright at the noise. Had it been with them in the cockpit? If so, how did it get out when the two men could not? Not near enough to call it, he could see it was not singed and its tail was held high as it picked its way across the field over the bits of still-burning debris.

When the wreckage had cooled enough to get the bodies out, the RAF regiment was put on guard, and the farmer went back to look, only to be told to keep away. Like the investigators, he could see no bullet holes in the fuselage and no smell of petrol. How, then had it caught fire with virtually no fuel in the tank? And where had the cat come from? On the way back to his cottage, he stopped to talk to an old woman who had, like him, seen the crash. He told her about the cat. "Is this it?" she asked as a black cat came out and twined itself round her ankles, purring.

Amazed and not a little frightened, he bent down. There were no singes, its whiskers had not been shortened, and it showed every sign of being at home. "Are you sure it's the same one?" he

asked. "Well, I don't have another one. Never had a cat before, so he's very welcome." He had just arrived, she said, within an hour of the fatal crash.

There never was an explanation. The cat lived with the old cottager until she died, then it vanished and was never seen again. Except, once or twice during its lifetime, the farmer saw it make several visits to the field. It would cross the grass, walk round the patch of still burnt grass, but never cross it. Some say a cat walks on the night of 22 October every 10th year, in which case it may have been seen in 2001. If not, we'll have to wait and see. I have been back to the field in other Octobers and have seen nothing.

Some still tell the story and speculate on it, but there is a generation now which has no

cause to remember or believe. It is odd that the grass never grew again where there was a burnt patch. Would the cat come to the call of a Czechoslovak voice, and are there any kin left in the Czech Republic or Slovakia still trying to find out how an uncle or grandfather died? They were young then and deserve to be remembered.

During my professional research into RAF history, I heard this story from several residents who had no contact with each other and I checked the names and the place through the files at the Public Record Office. I wonder if the pilots' names are recorded anywhere else.

EUNICE WILSON
London



CHUPABUNYIP

The Australian stamp depicting a bunyip [FT156:18] echoes the common descriptions of chupacabras, including kangaroo-like hind quarters, wings and fangs. It raises interesting questions, since Australia and South America are two of the only places in the world to have native marsupials. Could the chupacabras and the bunyip be the same, elusive marsupial?

TIM CLEGG
Leeds

TRICKY DICKY

In the late 1960s my father was photographed at some event with President Nixon (as he then was) and presented with copies of the photo. Now it must be understood that my father hated Nixon and considered him a disgrace to the office. He disliked the photo, but for some reason one copy was set aside and my sister and I found it in the bottom of a drawer when we cleaned out my parents' apartment after their deaths.

Thinking it was funny, I had the photo framed and hung it on the wall of my apartment. The next morning I found it on the floor. I rehung it only to find it on the floor again. This process was

repeated several times. A short time later my wife and I moved to a new house. We then tried to hang the picture again with the same results. Finally we gave up and the photo now resides in a box of odds and ends in the basement. Was Dad making a point from the other side?

TOM HITCH
Lexington, Kentucky

NESSIE FILM

The 1936 Irvine film of Nessie was never entirely lost. Part of it can be seen in the first episode of *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World* (1980), and I must have spotted it some half-dozen times in various Loch Ness-themed documentaries. The object depicted is certainly not 30ft (9m) long; rather it appears to be small, close to the camera (which has to pan rapidly to follow it) and inanimate. It could be a toy submarine or some other mechanical contrivance, but to me it's always looked like a small log being pulled along by a piece of string.

JONATHAN HILL
London

Editor's note: Dr Simon Cooke and SR Spillett both wrote to say that sequences from the Irvine Nessie film turned up 10 years ago on the documentary *The Loch Ness Monster produced by the official LNM Exhibition*. The programme is available on video (Polygram CFV12212).

MINORCA RUINS

The picture of a "watchtower" in Ulrich Magin's piece on the megaliths of Minorca [FT154:50] reminded me of a very similar structure in Richard Poe's book *Black Spark, White Fire*. Figure 14 shows a ruin in the Argolid region of Greece almost identical in shape but not as intact as the structure on Minorca. Poe claims it is a pyramid dating back to around 2400 BC and that it is one of several. The two structures are so similar that they might have been built by the same culture.

LAURA BLACK
by email

PINK GRASSHOPPERS

I read with interest Karl Shuker's account of pink grasshoppers [FT151:16]. In about 1997 I saw one of these by a path next to the bypass that goes across the border of Sheffield and Barnsley. It was a particularly garish shade of pink, which made it look like a cheap plastic toy. Like the Scottish site mentioned, the area contains an abundance of red clover.

PETE MELLA
by email

HAUNTED LANE

The area near Pitlington, Co. Durham, described by Isabelle Allinson [FT148:54] is actually known as Lady Peace Lane,

and is said to be haunted by the daughter of the local manor house who was murdered there. Her ghost walks the lane and her cries can be heard in the high village about half a mile away.

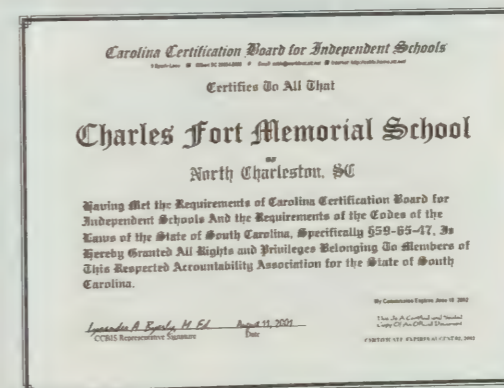
There is no historical evidence to back up this story, and possibly it has become confused with the actual murder of the 18-year-old servant Mary Ann Westrop at the nearby Hallgarth Mill in 1830. The Lane, woods and crossroads do have an eerie atmosphere. My grandmother lived in Pitlington at the turn of the 20th century, and she told me the older locals shunned the area at night. Children dared each other to walk the lane after dark, though few were brave enough to do it.

CHRIS SPEDDING
Seaton, Co Durham

CROWING HEN

I've just read the item about crowing hens [FT154:21]. My hen, Sophie, did the same when she lost her last pal. Now around eight years old, she lives as a house chicken with my mother and her parrot. Watching TV, preening on the sofa or lying in front of the fire - she has a good life. When she wants to go out, she does, and will spend many a happy summer's hour darting after flies or scratting the compost heap.

DEBBIE COWPERTHWAIT
by email



FORTEAN STUDIES: Luke, Ann and Todd Ziegart

FORT IN MEMORIAM

My wife Ann and I decided in 2000 that we would check into home-schooling for the 2001-2002 school year, which would be our son Luke's 11th grade year. We learned that we would have to apply for certification using an official name for our proposed one-student school.

After conferring with Luke, we considered

School of the Damned, after Charles Fort's *The Book of the Damned*, but in the end we decided on the less controversial name 'The Charles Fort Memorial School'. We all agreed that there was no-one better to name a school after than a man who spent his years in a life-long quest for knowledge.

TODD ZIEGART
North Charleston, South Carolina

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reviews

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OBSCURE OBJECTS OF DESIRE

True tales of blue glass, N-rays, atmospheric railways, proto-fortean and passing fancies

BANVARD'S FOLLY
 THIRTEEN TALES OF RENOWNED OBSCURITY, FAMOUS ANONYMITY, AND ROTTEN LUCK
 PAUL COLLINS

PICADOR, 2001
 HB, 286PP, B&W ILLUS, £14.99
 ISBN 0 330 48688 8

This is a good book by a good writer, easy to read and full of interest. It is about great thinkers, innovators and inventors who were not lucky and successful, like Darwin, Marx, Freud or Einstein, but ended up in discredit and obscurity. This does not mean that their ideas were wrong. Often they were widely accepted for a time, but science or fashion turned against these pioneers and they are no longer talked about.

Take General Augustus J Pleasonton, of Philadelphia, who discovered the miraculous properties of blue glass. If you put some blue glass sheets in the roof of your greenhouse, he found, the plants will grow better than under plain glass. Blue glass will cure diseases, rejuvenate old people, quieten lunatics and bring happiness to mankind. All these claims were proved by experiments. Glowing testimonies came from people who had tried it. Blue-glass conservatories and treatment centres were built according to his recipes. Quacks and opportunists exploited the mania, which lasted throughout the 1870s. Pleasonton made no money from his invention, but it led him on into mystical religion. He died happily in his faith and nothing has been written about him since.

His downfall was engineered by *The Scientific American* journal. Reacting against the blue glass fad, the editor launched a campaign to bust it. Scientists pointed out that blue glass inhibits the efficacy of sunlight. If people felt themselves healed by it, that was the placebo effect. The patients were not really made better, they just felt they were.

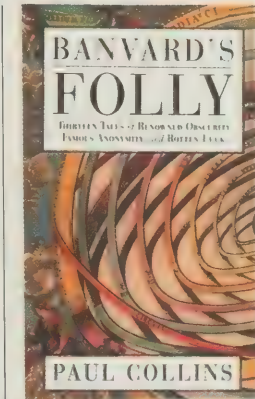
This is a common pattern in the history of science. Collins has

a chapter on the 'rays' mania of around 1900. X-rays were discovered, also radio waves, alpha, beta, and gamma rays and many others. Doctors adapted them for radioactive treatments and tonics, resulting in hundreds of grisly deaths. And then the famous French physicist Professor Blondlot discovered N-rays. We are made up of N-rays, and so is the whole Earth. With this knowledge, we can conquer illness and sharpen our senses, Blondlot proclaimed, and his colleagues confirmed it. He was awarded a large sum by a grateful nation and recommended for a Nobel prize.

But then the British scientists began niggling. A slight problem with N-rays was that you could only see them out of the corner of your eye. And you had to be young to do this. Crooke, Lord Kelvin and other seniors could not detect them. The British sent an investigator to Blondlot's laboratory. He realised that the great physicist was deceiving himself and the whole thing was an illusion. *Nature* reported the findings, whereupon N-rays fell out of fashion and were no longer heard of.

There are 13 chapters in this book. They are not about individual cranks and geniuses, but describe the various backgrounds to their obsessions. An excellent one is about the history of the pneumatic railway. Its star is Alfred E Beach, pioneer in 1870 of the New York subway, who offered to build the whole thing at his own expense. Frustrated by Boss Tweed, the notoriously corrupt mayor, he went ahead anyway. Secretly, working at night and without anyone's permission, he built an atmospheric railway that ran beneath City Hall, the mayor's headquarters. Tweed took it badly, and when the subway was finally commissioned, someone else was given the contract.

The first chapter, providing the title of the book, is about John Banvard, the richest and most famous American artist of the 1850s. I had heard vaguely about him from an item in Ripley's



WE ARE MADE UP OF N-RAYS, AND SO IS THE WHOLE EARTH

'Believe It Or Not' about the world's largest painting, a three-mile panorama of the Mississippi river. Banvard painted it, and he exhibited it on rollers, with a commentary and musical accompaniment, to huge, enthusiastic audiences. Dickens, Longfellow and other great people were delighted with it, and Queen Victoria enjoyed a special showing. Banvard went from strength to strength, building himself a large replica of Windsor Castle on Long Island and opening a museum in New York. He was a great showman, but his rival PT Barnum was better. Banvard was driven out of business. His castle was sold and demolished, and he retired in contented poverty to the Midwest, where he had come from. His fabulous panorama was lost, presumably destroyed, and so were his other great works.

Paul Collins claims to have dragged up his subjects "from the ash heap of thankless obscurity", as he nicely puts it. But that is not always the case. Some of his cranks and oddballs appear regularly in collections of eccentric

characters. There is nothing obscure about William Ireland, the 18th century London boy who forged documents and plays by William Shakespeare, but it is a wonderful story and beautifully retold. Nor are we short of essays on Delia Bacon, the lovely, learned but insane American lady who first cast doubts on the accepted authorship of Shakespeare (see Irving Wallace, *The Square Pegs*, 1958; Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 1970; and my own *Eccentric Lives and Peculiar Notions*, 1984).

Romeo Coates, the outrageously camp West Indian actor who scandalised London during the Regency, is in John Timbs's *English Eccentrics and Eccentricities*, 1866, and in Edith Sitwell's creative plagiarisation of Timbs, *English Eccentrics*, 1933. John Symmes, of hole-in-the-pole fame, is familiar to all students of that politically-sensitive subject, the hollow Earth.

Other characters are genuine rediscoveries. I loved the account of Martin Tupper, the rage of his age, Queen Victoria's favourite poet and widely beloved for his tendentious, moralistic verses. He was almost Poet Laureate, but suddenly fell out of fashion and almost no one has read him since. And I enjoyed the last chapter, on Thomas Dick, the Scottish astronomer and natural theologian. He reasoned that God would not waste space, so the whole Universe must be full of intelligent life. Further reasoning convinced him that the Moon was densely populated and comets were the vehicles of extra-terrestrial astronomers, exploring the Universe. His writings were a sensation of the 19th century and set the stage for modern ufology and science fantasy. I had never before heard of this great proto-fortean.

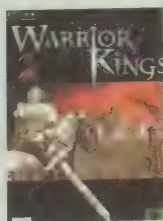
FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

GOOD INTRO TO PROTO-FORTEAN THINKERS **9**



PC GAMES

WARRIOR KINGS

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Warrior Kings is the most impressive Real Time Strategy game we've seen for some time. Set in a fantastical medieval world, complete with witches, demons and inquisitors, it sees you controlling the forces of the young Duke Artos in an attempt to oust an evil Patriarch from the seat of Empire, and takes you from the snowy north to the deserts of the Middle East. Your task requires numerous skills - from resource management to military tactics. Along the way, you can follow one of three paths - Imperial, Pagan or Renaissance. Each brings its own rewards or limitations (including, as a pagan, the chance to torch a wicker man full of peasants!). Although taking familiar elements from other strategy games, *Warrior Kings* mixes in RPG conventions and a strong narrative, and comes wrapped in some of the loveliest visuals to grace an RTS: the ability to crane the 'camera' up from a worms-eye view of battlefield carnage to an aerial shot of rolling hills receding into the distance is a huge pleasure in itself, and adds to the epic feel. Recommended.

DAVID SUTTON

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

DENSE, DIFFICULT, BUT
HUGELY ENJOYABLE GAME

8

COMPETITION

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NETHERWORLD

DISCOVERING THE ORACLE
OF THE DEAD

ROBERT TEMPLE

CENTURY, 2002
HB, 476PP, IND, REFS, ILLUS, £17.99
ISBN 0 7126 8404 2

THE GENIUS OF CHINA

3,000 YEARS OF SCIENCE,
DISCOVERY AND INVENTIONROBERT TEMPLE, EDITED BY
JEREMY NARBY & FRANCIS
HUXLEYPRION, 2002
PB, 248PP, B&W & COL ILLUS, £14.99
ISBN 1 85375 292

Netherworld begins keenly enough with a marvellous description of crawling through tunnels in Baia, Italy, and a truly scary evocation of their giant mosquitoes, but falters as soon as the book's thesis is revealed. It is that the Greek Underworld of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* was based on an actual location, and Temple is the only man alive to have been there (not counting the others).

Inspired by the late Robert Paget's *In the Footsteps of Orpheus* (1967), Temple spent 20 years trying to get permission to enter a tunnel complex in Baia depicted by Paget as an "Oracle of the Dead". Temple says Baia was meant to be a model of Hades, complete with its own River Styx. In early 2001, permission came. Robert booked in for an adventure holiday in the Bay of Naples with mate Michael Baigent, a fellow popular ancient mysteries author.

Then, dusting off an old book from 1984, *Conversations with Eternity*, his first rehash of Paget's work, there was the chance for a new book. Despite constantly



advertising his previous books in *Netherworld*, nowhere does Temple state that this is a revised edition of the previous book.

Okay, so now Temple has seen the place. What's he found? Tunnels, mud, mosquitoes, and a lone pipistrelle bat. To add substance to what is otherwise a book of archaeological psychometry with no evidence in 500 pages that these tunnels were ever used as an oracular model of the Underworld, he is reduced to the device of "seeming to see in my mind's eye". It's a cheap trick. Standing in a subterranean alcove less interesting than the average garden shed, he "seems to see" two female faces, one prophesying. He rounds off this farcical stage-management of the reader's gullibility with the statement: "Of course, all this may be pure fantasy, and quite likely it is." But the desired interpretation of a bunch of dirty old tunnels begins to gel in the reader's mind. He finds it necessary to point out the depth to which ancient divinatory practices have penetrated modern language by explaining that "portentous" comes from "portent" and "fateful" from "fate". Temple likes to present himself

as a respected scholar, an appearance not hard to achieve if you have a good library and know how to create an impression of being well-read. He uses his learning not to advance the sum total of human knowledge but rather to fulfil a publishing contract. *Netherworld* just adds to the ragbag of confusions in the minds of readers who thirst for "popular" presentations of ancient wonders but have little critical apparatus in place to realise they are being fed soft food for archaeological innocents, complete pap in other words.

The second part of *Netherworld*, on Chinese divination and in particular the *I Ching*, is revised merely by a few new insertions from its 1984 version. He makes little attempt to connect the material on Baia with the Chinese material.

By way of complete contrast, Temple's *The Genius of China*, previously published as *China: Land of Discovery and Invention*, has been issued in paperback. This is a distillation of the multi-volume life's work of Joseph Needham, his masterpiece *Science and Civilization in China*. Temple's book was created by permission and has a foreword by Needham. This is an excellent book; Temple is an able summariser of other people's deep scholarship. The book details three millennia of Chinese inventions and is richly illustrated. Given the expense of Needham's original works, *The Genius of China* is a valuable book, though let down by lack of an index.

STEVE MARSHALL

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

NETHERWORLD: POTBOILER AT BEST

3

GENIUS OF CHINA: A MIDGET ON
GIANT'S SHOULDERS STANDS TALL

9

through modern eyes and have been deaf to the role of sound in their construction and interpretation. He asserts that for ancient people, sound would have had greater importance than it does for us, perhaps holding magical and supernatural qualities.

Using a wide range of examples from the Palaeolithic caves of France, where rock art was found by researchers to be situated near to points of great resonance, to a Mayan temple which is thought to contain a stone age 'sound system' formed of vents and channels, Devereux builds a convincing case for the importance of sound in ancient rituals.

At Stonehenge, Britain's most famous megalithic site, two researchers from Reading University discovered that sound and resonance

were at their clearest and loudest on the axis of the monument, the line pointing toward the midsummer sunrise position. It is also believed that the inner horseshoe of stones may have been designed to reflect sound for an optimum auditory experience.

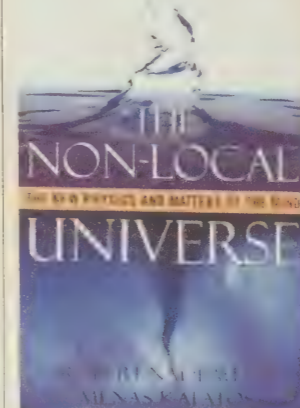
As Devereux acknowledges, acoustic archaeology is in its infancy and does not answer all one's questions about the enigmatic nature of ancient sites. However, it is a brilliant example of lateral thinking, and this book should interest and fascinate a wide range of people. Rock on.

GILES MORGAN

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

ORIGINAL AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING

8

THE NON-LOCAL
UNIVERSETHE NEW PHYSICS AND
MATTERS OF THE MINDROBERT NADEAU &
MENAS KAFATOSOXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999
PB, 240PP, IND, FIGS, NOTES, \$14.95
ISBN 0 19 514408 2

There is, it seems, more than one kind of local - there's the "this is a local shop for local people" type local and then there's the "happening in the same place" local. This book deals with the second kind of local, or rather its opposite. Yes, I know it sounds confusing, but then it is confusing - it is, after all, modern physics.

Basically, it all comes down to one of the weirdest problems in current physics. Under certain circumstances, two subatomic particles that have been in contact become what is known as "entangled", that is whenever something happens to one, it influences the state of

the other instantaneously. This happens however far apart the particles are, be it fractions of the diameter of an atom or the entire width of the Universe, and there is no delay between the first particle being acted upon and the other responding to the influence. According to the laws of physics, nothing can travel through the Universe faster than light, which would take billions of years to cross it; this influence therefore has to

sort of go round the back by some route through which, in some sense, the two particles are still close. Even Einstein found this hard to swallow, and to the end of his life argued against this "spooky action at a distance". None the less, subsequent experiments by Alan Aspect and others have shown that this weird connection undoubtedly exists and explaining how it works is one of physics' major challenges.

With its cover showing a tornado and a waterspout and the link between new physics and the mind in the title, I was somewhat dreading this being one of those sub-Dancing Wu-Li Masters rambles about mysticism, the new physics and how the brain works. While this might have been packaged to appeal to that audience, it is an altogether more fearsome beast. Emerging from a 15-year dialogue between a scientist and a philosopher, the matters of the mind in the title are philosophical concepts, not the workings

of brains, and the thrust of the book is how the idea and reality of non-locality has influenced philosophy and vice versa. To do this, we get a thorough grounding in the history of the theory of non-locality, from Einstein's life-long argument with Niels Bohr on the matter to its settlement by Bell's Theorem in 1964. Aspects experiments and beyond, a scoot through the history of philosophy that relates to this and some speculation of the parallels between these ideas and aspects of biology. It is lucidly articulated and thoroughly absorbing, but you need to be pretty comfortable with, if not deeply knowledgeable in, some fairly high-level thinking in all these areas. Fortunately, there is no major maths to conquer, but a beach read it is not.

IAN SIMMONS

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

DIFFICULT THOUGHTS
CLEARLY EXPOUNDED

8

PARAPSYCHOLOGY

THE SCIENCE OF UNUSUAL
EXPERIENCEEDITED BY RON ROBERTS &
DAVID GROOMARNOLD, 2001
PB, 186PP, IND, REFS, £12.99
ISBN 0 340 76168 7

Parapsychology is an ambitious overview, marred by an overly opinionated introduction and conclusion. It's a collection of essays by top UK researchers in the field, and includes work by cautious psi proponents as well as hard sceptics. Some effort is made to relate parapsychology to the mainstream; areas like coincidence and psychic fraud are covered in addition to more 'paranormal' subjects like near-death experiences or alien abductions.

Such a broad sweep is to a degree laudable. Many of the arguments against, say, telepathy rely on the fact that people are poor judges of probability, and many popular books about psychic phenomena ignore this, even if they acknowledge fraud as a problem. In addition, several purely psychological phenomena - such as dreams - seem conducive to apparent paranormal phenomena. The inclusion of astrology and meditation seems more difficult to justify, and one is left with the impression that the editors think that 'parapsychology' covers anything the psychological mainstream sees as slightly embarrassing.

This suspicion is hard to avoid when reading the introductory and concluding chapters, both by Ron Roberts. In the first chapter,

he mounts a defense of scientific thought, rejecting the idea that science is conditioned by the culture in which it is practiced. Roberts seems to think that admitting this would reduce science to one belief system amongst others, and goes on to imply that rejecting scientific rationalism may lead to totalitarian ways of thinking. He even begins the chapter with a quote from 1984! It is true that science has much better claims to objectivity than many systems of thought, but Roberts's argument comes down to a rejection of postmodernity, whose proponents are sceptical that science is a source of 'ultimate truth'.

In the last chapter, Roberts takes these claims further, suggesting that parapsychology is part of a battle between science

and religious belief. This is also problematic because of Roberts's claim that paranormal experience should be seen as pathological. He's right to identify wishful thinking as harmful, and rightly challenges orthodox thinking. But in embracing so wholeheartedly the establishment psychological view that categorises unusual experience as delusion or fraud, he is himself, perhaps, guilty of orthodox thinking.

Despite these problems, this book is a useful introduction, and is better referenced and more informative than most 'popular' works on the subject. Just take the framing chapters with a pinch of salt.

MATT COLBORN

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

AMBITIOUS IF OPINIONATED

6

THE DREAMER OF THE
CALLE DE SAN SALVADORVISIONS OF SEDITION AND
SACRILEGE IN SIXTEENTH
CENTURY SPAIN

ROGER OSBORNE

PIMLICO, 2002
PB, 252PP, IND, BIB, £12.50
ISBN 0 7126 6497 1

Lucrecia de León was born in Madrid in 1568. In 1587, during El Siglo de Oro, when Spain ruled half the known world, two priests started tran-

scribing the illiterate girl's apocalyptic dream narratives - more than 400 in the two-and-a-half years up to her arrest by the Inquisition. She foretold the king's death and the defeat of the Armada, and she made indiscreet comments about the Inquisitor: her dreams were the evidence against her. As a black-clad, masked and shackled man told her in an early dream, "Take care to whom you tell your dreams, for look what has become of me."

This book presents 35 repre-

sentative dreams from a four-month period, accompanied by a commentary which avoids straightforward dream interpretation in favour of a wider analysis of how Lucrecia allowed her dreams to shed light on her world. One dream tells her that she is "the mirror in which all these people are seen so that you can give warning." The dreams are awash with gore: the Ordinary Man, whom she identifies as Moses, nightly shows her corpses floating face-down in rivers of

blood, eagles with blood-stained beaks rip at flesh, women with serpent-entwined breasts hold bleeding heads, and angels descend on clouds of blood. The very heavens are scarlet. The commentary is erudite and thought-provoking. A wonderful black-pudding of a book.

VAL STEVENSON

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT

MYSTICAL SPANISH GORE-FEST

8



FILM

REVELATION

WR/DIR: STUART URBAN, 2002
WWW.REVELATION-MOVIE.COM



It sounds straightforward. Take a splash of Holy Blood, some astrological symbols, a pinch of sulphur, a few drops of mercury, some strands of DNA, a mystical Macguffin, some sacred geometry, NWO silliness, Terence Stamp and some sacred sex. Add to Holy Grail, stir with Caduceus and - hey presto! - you have an intriguing new British occult thriller.

This isn't it. Billed as a "thinking man's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*", *Revelation* begins well but soon gets bogged down. An enigmatic billionaire is seeking to unlock the mystery of the "Loculus", a box whose secret could change the world. Also hot on its trail are the malevolent Knights Templar. Our heroes, the billionaire's rebel son and an enigmatic alchemist, traverse space and time in search of the Loculus, clocking up great locations and encountering noted actors in interesting cameos; but the whole is far less than the sum of its parts.

Revelation sets out as a lively, if clunky, occult horror flick complete with murderous spectral shock troops and black dogs. But its obsession with detail brings it to a standstill. Lack-lustre action scenes fail to ease the esoteric congestion.

Crippled by seemingly endless bouts of tedious explanatory dialogue, it's about as involving as watching somebody else using a CD ROM on the subject. In fact, much of the film is spent watching other people using a CD ROM on the subject! As full of itself as Ouroboros, *Revelation* is an ultimately hollow experience that sinks, Atlantis-like, under the weight of its own delusions of grandeur.

MARK PILKINGTON

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT
A HOLLOW MIXTURE OF DERRING-DO AND HOKUM **3**

THEATRE EARTH

WHO PULLS THE STRINGS?
THE ULTIMATE CONSPIRACY

ALDER

ALPHA EDUCATION, 2002 (PO BOX 2, ROTTINGDEAN, BRIGHTON BN2 8JW, UK)
VOL 1: 568PP, B&W ILLUS, £16.99, ISBN 0 9529567 1 3
VOL 2: 602PP, B&W ILLUS, £16.99, ISBN 0 9529567 2 1

On the front cover there is a sticker which reads: "Warning: do not read this book if you have any mental problems or you have strict religious beliefs".

On the title page of Volume 1 we read: "About The World Order, gods, Atlantis, The World Grid, Magnetic Reversals, Magicians, Cosmic Powers, Secret Lodges, Occultists, Scientologists, UFOs, European Union, Extra-terrestrials, The Apocalypse, Genetic Engineering, God genes, The Hidden Science, The Minoans, The Holy Grail, www.com/grid, September 11, Galactic Confederations, a Conspiracy against Planet Earth and a plan that has never ceased to exist".

"The ultimate conspiracy!" That's a clue. "Galactic Confederations." Another. A warning on the front cover? Another. Before I have read the first line of the first chapter, I know this is going to be nonsense. But let's be fair. What is the first line of text? It is this in the Introduction on p11: "In 1986 the author as a Biochemist, set out to resolve the mechanism of can-

cer outside of the orthodox establishment. No funding or grants were made available to author for this research, despite the numerous attempts and requests from [sic] grant funding bodies and Trusts for a slice of the solid gold 'grave train' of funding that it is available for cancer research: the eventual bill was to cover 15 years of intensive research."

By the time I have reached the end of the first line it is clear that the author cannot write, nor punctuate, and didn't think it worth while running his or her manuscript past someone who could. I struggled through a couple more pages of the Introduction to this on p13: "The cancer research like an errant child, led the author through the mined battle fields of history, religion, politics, psychology, biochemistry, archaeology and anthropology and finally into the forbidden no-man's land of metapolitics - or the politics of the soul. The author on instinctive intuition returned to Greece in 1993, on one level to escape the vicious attacks shown on the front cover of *The Second Millennium Working Report into Cancer*, but on another level not quite clear to the author at the time, it was a Cycle of Eternal Return."

The politics of the soul? Looking for an index (no index) I flipped to the end of the first volume, p568, and found this, the

opening sentence of the final paragraph of Volume 1.

"It is interesting that Xena was, according to Hubbard, the Arch Mind controller and Tatrur the Arch body controller, which reflects the dual nature of the Diablo geometric with its lower order of data storage in the morpho-genetic bioplasma controlling bodies and phylogenetic line of survival; and the higher order of data storage in the spiritual bioplasma which appears to concern religious events." Huh? The author, 'Alder', is someone called R Henry Bsc. Mr or Ms Henry Bsc has written and, I guess, self-published over 1,100 pages, full of illustrations, of this stuff. The entire paranormal/mystical spectrum since Pauwels and Bergier's *The Dawn of Magic* in the mid-Sixties, seems to have been chucked in - along with a large dollop of conspiracy theories, many of them drawn from the Jew-hating right. I haven't read this - I would need to be paid a lot of money to read this - but just on a skim it resembles a 1,100-page edition of *Nexus*, minus the occasional good articles which make *Nexus* worth looking at.

ROBIN RAMSAY

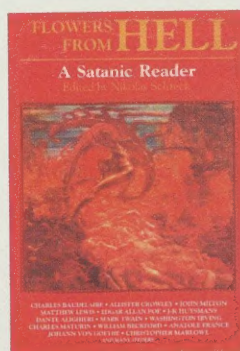
FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT
MORE THAN 1,000 UNREADABLE AND UNREVEALING PAGES **1**

FLOWERS OF HELL

A SATANIC READER
MIKOLAS SCHRECK

CREATION BOOKS, 2001
PB, 285PP, B&W ILLUS, £11.95
ISBN 1 84068 024 5

Any book that describes itself as "a Satanic reader" must be fun. The appropriately-named Mikolas Schreck provides the scholar of the Fallen Angel with a selection from some of the greatest literary minds of all time in an attempt to show the growth of Old Scratch as a character. As Schreck rightly points out, Satan isn't really mentioned much in the Bible: instead, the Devil as we know him has evolved from the minds of authors throughout history. Each author and his work is briefly profiled, and their ongoing efforts towards the construction of Satan as a character are outlined. Some stand out more than others, with the always-entertaining J K Huysmans being particularly memorable. Schreck gives us a collage of deranged monks, scientists, decadents and (most worryingly) a single MP. Then he does the best thing any selector can do. He lets the authors do the rest.



Schreck has chosen well, including some unexpected and rare gems. Particularly welcome are Mark Twain, who wrote *The Mysterious Stranger* when he was old and misanthropic, and Max Beerbohm, whose *Enoch Soames* is a tale that could be applied equally well to Marilyn Manson, Slipknot *et al* as to the Decadent poets he satirises. There are three tales by Edgar Poe to prove that Schreck doesn't take the Devil over-seriously, and the never tongue-tied Aleister Crowley gets two wonderfully overblown selections.

Schreck has also chosen a series of artworks to break up his text: these are all excellent, and illustrate Schreck's "development of Satan"

almost as well as the readings.

Some sections, I feel, could have been chosen better: Milton's *Paradise Lost* in particular is badly represented. A better selection would be the grandeur of Pandemonium or the bravery of Satan's flight through the Void, but hey, what're you doing only reading part of *Paradise Lost* anyway? Blake is notable by his absence, although he is mentioned in the introduction. His wonderful *Proverbs of Hell* would fit right into the selection. Lastly, the large array of Middle English Devils who delighted early theatregoers are unrepresented, Schreck leaping straight from Dante to Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. Yet these are very minor complaints against what is, overall, an excellent reader. Those expecting a starter pack on the Black Arts should look elsewhere, but anyone who wants to trace one of the most enduring of all characters over the past 700 years would do well to run out and buy this book.

STEVE PENN

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT
THE DEVIL OF A GOOD READ... **9**

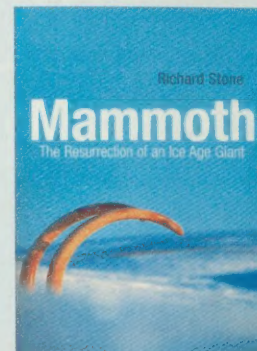
MAMMOTH

THE RESURRECTION OF A
STONE AGE GIANT

RICHARD STONE

FOURTH ESTATE, 2001
HB 242PP, IND, B&W ILLUS, £14.99
ISBN 0 84115 517 9

There's more to woolly mammoths than shaggy fur and the ability to survive on Ice Age grasslands, and in a well-written *tour de force* Richard Stone guides us through the discovery of the mammoth, its biology, lifestyle and extinction, and the dynamic Pleistocene world in which it thrived. He dispels the myths that the mammoth was poorly suited for its environment, that it inhabited a barren Arctic desert (mammoths actually lived on cool savannahs alive with plants and animals) or that there was only one species of mammoth. Rumours of mammoth survival, their role in myth and legend, and the debate surrounding their mysterious extinction are also covered. While Stone leans favourably toward the idea that a terrifying 'hyperdisease' was the culprit behind the Pleistocene mass die-off, this is nothing more than an idea and, not only does it lack evidence, it's perhaps



contradicted by studies suggesting that human overkill was the main reason for the Pleistocene extinctions.

Much of Stone's book revolves around the hunt for mammoth DNA as he follows French, Russian and Japanese teams in a race to find an intact frozen carcass, hopelessly with well-preserved genitals. It's hard not to regard these expeditions as publicity stunts, and to the cynic the attempt to resurrect the mammoth seems frivolous, especially to those who

argue that we should be saving living species, not wasting money on extinct ones. However, plans are afoot in Russia to produce 'Pleistocene Park', a recreation of the Pleistocene grasslands (since replaced by mossy marshland) complete with reintroduced bison, horses and, maybe, mammoths. In bringing the reader up to speed on this and much more, Stone succeeds admirably and *Mammoth* is a must-read.

DARREN NAISH

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT
A MUST-READ FOR PLEISTOCENE FANS **9**

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DVD

THE WICKER MAN



Robin Hardy's once-neglected masterpiece - in which Edward Woodward's 'Christian copper' discovers pagan doings on a remote Scottish island - is now widely recognised as a near-perfect gem of a film and probably needs no introduction for most FT readers.

It arrives on DVD with (for once) a host of desirable extras that you'll actually want to get your hands on. This double DVD set provides the original 85-minute cinema release and the recently assembled director's cut which delivers a whole 15 minutes of extra footage, as well as a 35-min documentary on the film's tangled history, an interview with the glorious Christopher Lee, a full-length audio commentary by Hardy, Woodward, Lee and Mark Kermode and much more. Essential. DAVID SUTTON

FORTEAN TIMES VERDICT
WHISKEY GALORE GONE BAD - A BRITISH CLASSIC **10**

COMPETITION

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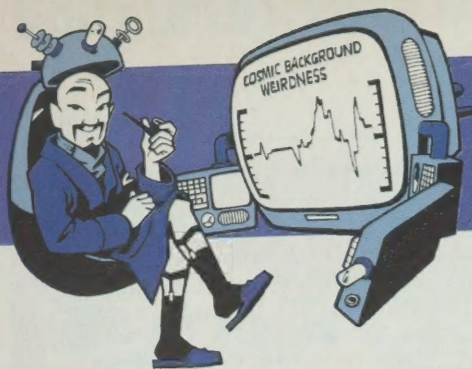
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HIEROPHANT

IN HIS FORTRESS OF ARROGANCE, DEEP BELOW THE HIMALAYAS, THE IMMORTAL ASCENDED MASTER KNOWN AS THE HIEROPHANT TRAVELS THE MORE DISREPUTABLE PATHS OF FORTEANA...

Our dear chum Uri Geller - rarely one to shy away from attaching his name to anyone and anything which threatens to become famous - has apparently been glued to something called *Pop Idol*, which I take it is some sort of television tribute to great lemonade makers such as R White and Cantrell and Cochrane. Anyway, Mr Geller demonstrated once again that remarkable talent for backing winners which has stood him in such great stead over the years by announcing that he was backing one Mr Gareth Gates to triumph in the competition. For those who, like myself, would rather listen to broken industrial machinery than anything that passes for music these days, I should explain that Mr Gates lost, while his opponent went on to secure the fastest-selling British single of all time. Let's hope Mr Geller is more successful in his stated aim of curing Mr Gates's stutter.



base. The eyes are clear and scary looking and he has two large tusks protruding from his upper lip [sic throughout]. Sadly, it failed to meet its surprisingly low reserve of \$143, possibly because it resembled, according to various online forteans, "a shaved monkey with a couple of extra teeth glued in" or "a piece of deerskin badly pulled over a cheap head form and poorly stitched". One lives in hope.

Finally - and continuing on a loosely financial theme - I'm pleased to report a curious bit of fortean cross-cultural migration. Most of those reading *Fortean Times* will, I hope, be familiar with the "Cargo Cults" of various Pacific islands. In brief, the cults believed that by disposing of their belongings they would become eligible for the magical 'cargo' dispensed by a messianic figure known as 'John Frum'. Weirdly, the meme now seems to have made a quantum

jump into the sphere of American evangelical Christianity. A preacher named Dennis Lee has apparently been wandering the US preaching that on the 4th of July this year, God Himself will reveal the secret of free energy, but only to true believers. The believers, you will be unsurprised to learn, have to buy into the scheme via a faintly suspect system which seems to have much in common with more prosaic pyramid schemes. The 'free electricity' is scheduled to come from what appear to be 'perpetual motion' machines, and thus also rather suspect. What doesn't appear to be suspect is Lee's long history of run-ins with officials across America over the last 15 years. He has even served two years in a California prison over a number of grand theft and other charges.

If you have a lead on any paranormal gossip, share it with the Hierophant... hierophant@ifgmags.com

We all know what an utter pain in the backside zombies have become of late. Police, local councils and residents' associations seem equally unwilling to deal with the problem, preferring to pass the buck from one agency to the next. We can at least now relax in our homes, thanks to the introduction of a vital piece of anti-zombie kit from Onko Enterprises - the Zombie Alert. As described at <http://loris.net/zombie/zproducts.html>, this fantastic advance in zombie warning technology "uses the patented cyclo-kinetic energy radiation server which will detect zombie presence up to 1700 yards away" - and all in a device which in every other respect resembles a smoke alarm with "ZOMBIE ALERT" written on the box in big blue letters. It's yours for just "three very reasonable payments of \$39.95 (plus taxes, shipping and handling)" and is covered by Onko Enterprise's \$1,000 guarantee: "Should Zombie Alert fail to operate in a documented Zombie attack Onko Enterprises will pay the above sum to

the owner of the failed product." We now have several of these devices dotted around the Fortress of Arrogance, and my boffins tell me they're on the verge of perfecting a version which detects the psycho-episcopal energy emitted by mad bishops.

The online auction house e-Bay has, in recent years, become a surprisingly useful resource for the seeker after weirdness. You might remember the famous 'haunted painting' which appeared a couple of years ago, and more than one soul has been offered for sale. In an exciting crypto-zoological development, a seller recently offered an absolutely unique item - a Skunk Ape head. The Ape, you will no doubt be aware, is one of the many humanoid cryptids said to stalk America, specifically the Florida Everglades. The seller, sadly, is rather cagey about its provenance, describing it as "life-like", "unusual" [sic] and "a great conversation piece in any hunter's trophy display." The head is "mounted on a solid 8 inch diameter wood terraced round

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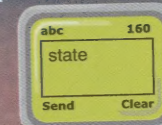
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